

# SUMMERLEE MUSEUM OF SCOTTISH INDUSTRIAL LIFE

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## Miners' Row

# Miners' Row 1840s to 1910



# Communal Wash House





# Miners' Row Stand Pipe

Most people didn't have running water in their houses and so miner's rows had communal water from stand pipes or pumps in the street.



# Communal Outside Toilet







# 1840s

**In the 1840s living conditions for workers were cramped and very basic, with large families often sharing just one room for cooking, eating and sleeping.**

Furniture was sparse because low wages made it difficult to afford more. It was sometimes necessary to travel around in order to find work, so having fewer belongings at least made it slightly easier for families to move.

Houses like this often suffered from damp in bad weather, due to poor construction, and sometimes puddles even formed on the stone floor.

Cooking was done over an open hearth and water wasn't always provided on the row. Sometimes it would be necessary to walk long distances to find water for cooking and cleaning.

During this period, the 1842 Mines Act came into effect to combat dangerous working conditions. The Act prevented all females and boys under the age of ten from going below ground to work. Due to these restrictions, women started to look for other means of bringing money in, such as spinning yarn that could be sold on.









# 1880s

In the 1880s, miners' houses were still very small but families were a bit better off due to a slightly higher wage – around three shillings a day in 1876 compared with two shillings a day in 1842. This meant that there was more money available to buy a large decorative item, like a chest of drawers or a cabinet, which were considered to be a sign of prosperity.

In this era the range became more common, making cooking easier than in the days of an open fire. The range also provided light and heat to the home, but dampness was still an issue in bad weather.

Water for bathing, cleaning and cooking would have to be collected from the local standpipe (if available) and then carried to the house.

Many wealthy industrialists and mining companies had set up churches and schools for miners and their families by this time in order to create a more disciplined, productive workforce and to reinforce their own position of influence and power. These were paid for by money taken from the workers and non-attendance was frowned upon.







# 1910s

Around 1910, wages were still relatively low and the family would still live, eat and sleep in the same room. Despite this, the room had a homely feel with more decorative items found in comparison to earlier cottages.

By the early 20th century advances in technology meant that gas lighting was now available. However, it was rare in working class

homes like this and paraffin lamps and candles were still commonly used, while gas was mainly used for street lighting.

Indoor plumbing was also still rare in homes, but water could be fetched from the community standpipe for cooking, cleaning and washing.

If there was no community washhouse available, people would wash their clothes in the street. Living so closely together fostered a true community spirit within the row.

This was a difficult period for miners. Strikes were organised in an attempt to get better wages that would reflect the dangerous working conditions, but mine owners took a dim view of their efforts. Striking workers often lost their jobs and were evicted from their tied homes. Large numbers were then replaced by immigrant workers who were desperate to survive and so would work for less money.







# 1940s Living Room

This room shows a comfortable home during World War Two.

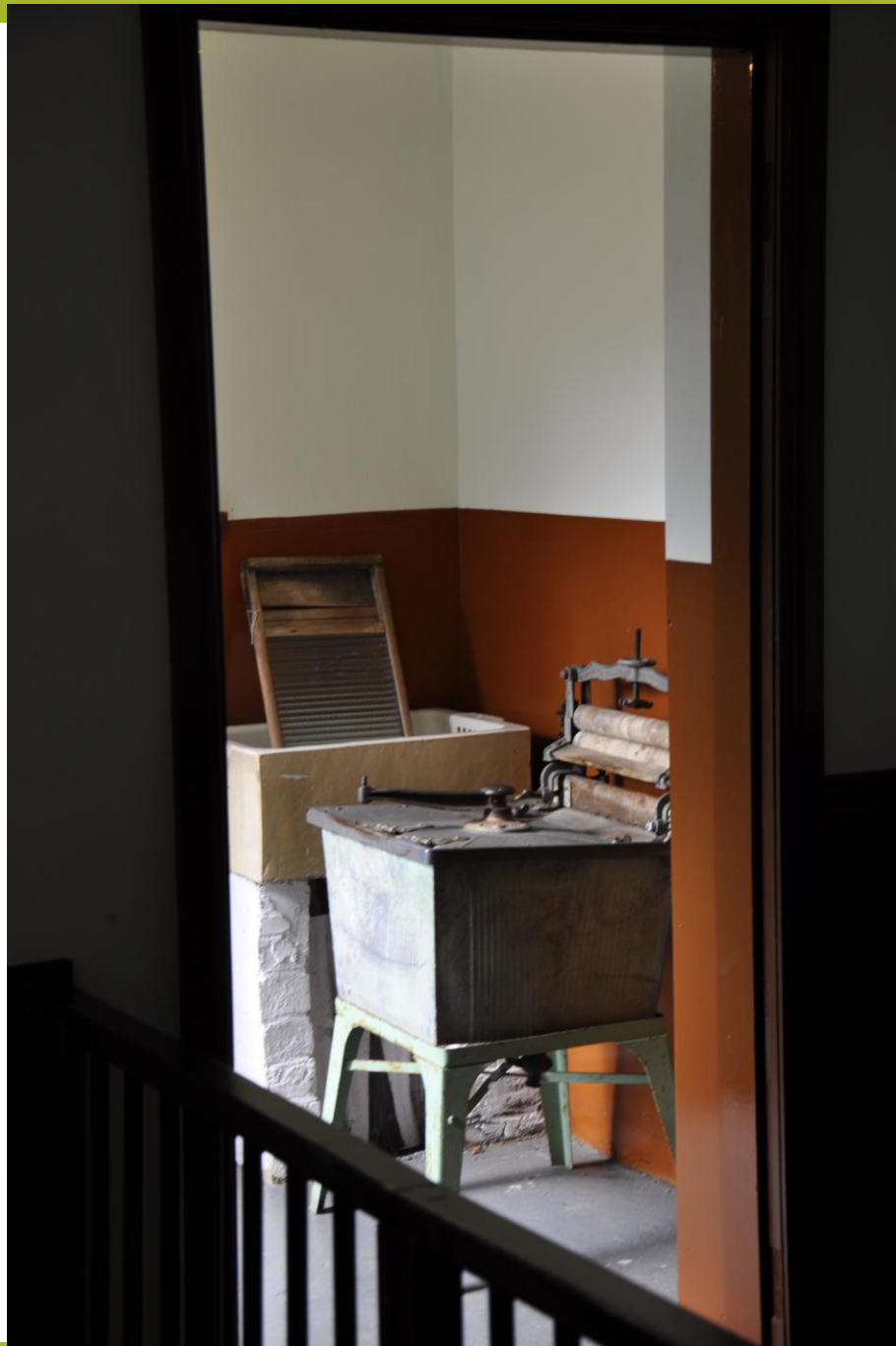
It may have belonged to a station master or the manager of a small colliery. As well as this living space, the family would have a separate kitchen, upstairs bedrooms and maybe even a garden.

By this time, electricity was common in working class homes, but wartime light restrictions were in place. Blackout curtains were hung on the windows to prevent light being seen by enemy aircraft at night.

Families often stayed indoors and gathered in the living area in the evenings to listen to news reports on the wireless radio. Reading, playing games like dominoes and listening to music on the gramophone were also popular pastimes, while dance halls and cinemas provided an escape from the harsh realities of wartime.

Miners were often asked to stay at home rather than enlist in the army, as they were providing an important service. Women frequently had to take on jobs normally only given to men. The uniform shows that the man of this house volunteered in the Home Guard on top of his normal job.













# 1940s to 1980s Houses





# 1940s Kitchen

The standard of living in the 1940s was a dramatic improvement compared to earlier times, thanks to the introduction of electricity and indoor plumbing.

As in the 1910 home, the traditional stove is present but there is also a gas cooker, which made cooking quicker and easier. The ties between the past and present are further shown as we see both a traditional carpet beater and a modern 1940s vacuum cleaner.

However, the 1940s was also a time of shortage and austerity, with families being expected to "do their bit" for the war effort. Rationing was an essential part of daily wartime life. Ration books were provided for everyone in the household, and coupons from these books would allow people to purchase small quantities of essential food and clothing.

Fresh food was very scarce during the war and people had to get used to the taste of dried eggs and milk. The government encouraged the public to supplement their rations by growing their own garden vegetables and to alter and repair old clothing. "Make do and mend" was a popular wartime phrase.



# 1960s Living Room

In contrast to the more muted interior decoration of previous eras, the 1960s brought with it a relaxed attitude towards the use of colours and pattern when decorating the home.

Items that were considered something of a luxury in the 1940s, such as telephones and electrical fires, were now far more common due to the fact that more people could afford to own them in the post-war era.

Television had become the main form of entertainment by the 1960s. Popular programmes such as the Royal Variety Show and Coronation Street were created for all the family to watch together. There was also a much wider variety of music available to listen to and new developments in technology meant that it was now possible to record music from the radio to listen to again at leisure.

Women now commonly went out to work to help supplement the family income. Due to the development of birth control, families were often much smaller than they had been before. There was also a decrease in cross-generational living as more people chose to live on their own.



# 1960s Bathroom and Utility room

By the 1960s homes were larger and the standard of living had increased so many more houses than previously had indoor toilet facilities, especially newly built houses.

Prior to central heating being widely available, rooms throughout the house would have been warmed using small electrical heaters such as the one found in the bathroom.

The utility room is similar to the traditional scullery in regards to its purpose; for example washing, cleaning and storage. The room would be used to save space in the kitchen and would normally contain larger appliances.

The sink and the cupboards for cleaning supplies were to be found here alongside the washing machine and any other larger items.

In contrast to the models of washing machine available in the 1940s or even into the 1950s, where a degree of manual contribution was required, this one was fully electrical and automatic. The clothes could have either been hung outside or else put on a clothes dryer similar to the one in our 1960s kitchen.





# 1960s Kitchen

In a change from previous eras, the 1960s kitchen was not the central point of home life. There is no stove here – instead, the focus is on the modern appliances.

Homes during this era became more bright and colourful. In kitchens, the playfulness of the 1960s even extended to the appliances. The large pink fridge from the Frigidaire range was a popular style within the modern sixties home and a whole range of complementary pieces were produced to match. The advent of television meant that more companies were advertising their goods and people now had a choice of products.

The 1960s also saw an increase in the attempts to make food preparation easier and quicker. Stainless steel and Tupperware products came into popular use. These and other domestic gadgets could be found in kitchens across the country.

Wartime food restrictions had lasted well into the 1950s, but by the sixties there was a much greater variety of food available. Convenience foods designed to save time were popular, including frozen foods, standard sliced white bread and “instant” potatoes and desserts.

















# 1980s

During the 1980s, the gap between rich and poor widened as heavy industry went into sharp decline, leading to mass unemployment. For miners, the mid-eighties was a dark time of industrial dispute and many men lost their jobs.

Despite this, consumerism was encouraged and the 1980s saw a rise in home ownership and the purchase of oversized goods, from furnishings to technology. For the first time, showers became the norm for working class homes, while kitchens were kitted out with a breakfast bar and gadgetry like the Soda Stream, jug kettle and microwave.

Window blinds, flame-effect electric fires, glass-topped furniture and large sectional sofas were especially popular in the eighties. Bright colours and geometric prints were common – even neon! By the end of the decade, black ash furniture was popular, often with grey or red furnishings or decoration to add a splash of colour.

Home entertainment was now very varied. Music centres boasted audio cassette players, and portable machines like the Walkman and ghetto blaster were popular. VCR (video cassette recorder) sales rocketed and the first mainstream home computers appeared, such as the ZX Spectrum and Atari.







# Miners' Row 1940s Garden with Anderson Shelter





