

Teacher's Notes for 1960s house Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life, Coatbridge



Key points of the Summerlee 1960s house:

- Its an ordinary working family's home.
- Its not a highly fashionable design.
- It shows the sort of colours, furniture and objects that a family working in mining, steel or other heavy industry might have lived in.
- A family with two or three children might have lived here.

There are lots of things to see. Look out for the toys, pictures and clothes on display

These are the four areas to look at:

- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Living room
- Garden

1960s living room



In contrast to the often muted decorating found in the 1940s house, the 1960s brought with it a more relaxed attitude towards the use of colours and pattern when decorating the home. Items that would have been considered a greater 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.

Women would often work to help supplement the family income. Due to the development of birth control, families would often be much smaller than they had been before. There was a decrease in cross-generational living due to more people choosing to live on their own.

There was a much wider variety of music available to listen to and new developments in technology meant that it was now possible to record your own music from the radio to listen to again.

Television had become an important part of life by the 1960s. Popular TV shows such as Star Trek, Thunderbirds and Top of the Pops were created for all the family.

Ask pupils what is different in this room compared with their living room at home.

Talk about
Colours and patterns
Heating
Double glazing (invented in the 1930s but not common in these houses until much later)
The TV (black and white not colour, no dvd player, digital box etc)
Furniture
Carpets

1960s bathroom and utility room



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

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

The utility room is similar to the traditional scullery in regards to what the room would be used for, 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 would be found here alongside the washing machine and any other larger items.

In contrast to the washing machine available in the wartime house, this one was fully electrical and automatic unlike some previous models where there was a degree of manual contribution required. The clothes could have either been hung outside or else they could be put on the clothes dryer which can be found in the kitchen.

Ask pupils what is different in this room compared with their living room at home.

Talk about
Showers and baths – compare with the older houses opposite

1960s kitchen



Unlike previous eras, the 1960s kitchen was not the central point of home life. There is no stove here and instead the focus is on the modern appliances that can be found. The 1960s saw an increase in the attempts to make food preparation easier and quicker and as a result there is an increase in gadgetry which can be spotted throughout the room.

The room, like the rest of the house, is decorated brightly and the playfulness of this era can even be found with the appliances itself. The large pink fridge, from the Frigidaire range was a popular style within the modern 1960s home and a whole range of complimentary pieces was produced.

The advent of television meant that more companies were choosing to advertise their goods and as a result we can see that there is a larger variety of goods available. The '60s were the dawn of 'convenience foods' such as 'instant' potatoes and desserts that were all designed to save time.

Upstairs can't be seen but would have had two bedrooms and maybe a box room.

Ask pupils what is different in this room compared with their living room at home.

Talk about

Colours and patterns

Fitted kitchens

The green/blue cupboard is called a kitchenette.

The sorts of food they eat - Packet food was seen as the future and was very influenced by the freeze dried food spacemen ate.

Garden Area



The gardens on display here are an example of what may have been found in a 1940s and 1960s garden.

The Anderson Shelter found in the 1940s garden was easily constructed and common during the war. Families would go into it when the air raid siren was heard and would mean that you wouldn't have to go to the local community shelter.

Anderson shelters were often decorated with soil and vegetables or flowers grown on it. This had two functions – to provide an extra level of protection should a bomb hit and to also allow households to grow more vegetables.

Growing your own vegetables was important in the war effort due to rationing and leaflets were produced encouraging people to grow their own 'victory gardens'.

In the 1960s, gardens were not that common in urban areas, but in more suburban and rural communities there was a move away from the functionality of the wartime garden towards something more decorative and relaxed. Crazy paving – the broken slabs was very popular. Vegetable patches became less common, and in their place fun, vibrant flowers and shrubs were planted along with mowed lawns and paving. Garden Centre's became popular which meant a more exotic selection of plants and shrubs were available.

If pupils have a garden at home or school talk about what sorts of things they do in it.

Talk about
Play games
Help grow vegetables of flowers

Compare this 1960s garden with its crazy paving to the 1940s one next door. Which one do they like best?

Other places to look for 1960s houses:

Cumbernauld
East Kilbride
Castlemilk
New (old) Gorbals

The main type of housing developed in this era was the high-rise or sky-scraper block of flats. You can see these if you look towards Sunnyside Station beyond the Lamberton works.

These houses were thought to be the solution to slums, poor quality housing and over crowding

Song to sing

Jeely Piece Song

Written in the 1960s by Adam McNaughton. It looks at life in the new high rise flats that replaced the slums of the inner cities and were intended to be a solution to the problems of bad quality old style housing.

I'm a sky scraper wean, I live on the nineteenth floor
But I'm no goin' oot tae play any more.
'Cause since we moved to oor new house I'm wastin' away
For I'm getting one meal less every day.

Chorus:

Oh ye canna fling pieces oot a twenty story flat
Seven hundred hungry weans will testify to that
If it's butter, cheese or jeely, if the bread is plain or pan
The odds against it reaching us is ninety-nine to one

On the first day my Maw flung oot a daud o' hovis broon
It came skitin' oot the windae and went up instead o' doon
Noo ev'ry twenty seven hours it comes back into sight
Cause my piece went intae orbit and became a satellite

On the next day my Maw flung me oot a piece again
It went up and hit a pilot in a fast, low flying plane
He scrapped it off his goggles, shouting through the intercom
The Clydeside Reds have got me wi' a breid 'n jelly bomb

On the third day my Maw tho't she would try another throw
The Salvation Army band was standin' doon below
'Onward Christian Soldiers' was the tune they should've played
But the Oompah man was playing piece 'n marmalade

We've wrote awa' to Oxfam to try an' get some aid
We all joined together and have formed the Piece Brigade
We're gonna march to London tae demand our civil rights
Like nae more hooses over piece flinging height

breid: bread wean: child
doon: down hoose: house
jeely piece: bread and jelly sandwich
oor: our oot: out
piece: sandwich

