



## **15 Obsolete Items of the Polish Home** *The obsolete home essentials*

Over the years, the household items we rely on day to day to make our houses a “home” have become obsolete. This is due to changing lifestyles and technology. From September 1, 2018 the halogen bulb moves closer to joining this list as the next phase of EU regulation sees the banning of non-directional halogen lamps – otherwise known as the standard ‘pear or candle shaped bulbs’. For Bulgarian households, this marks a further step towards a greener lifestyle, significantly reducing energy consumption - and brings another common home item of today a step closer to extinction.

In partnership with Deborah Sugg Ryan, Professor of Design History and Theory, University of Portsmouth, Signify takes a walk down memory lane to curate the top 50 home items which have become obsolete over the last 60 years- in the same way the halogen bulb soon will.

Showing family holiday pictures on a slide projector or listening to your Walkman are now activities of the past - snapshots in time which have since been replaced as a result of technology and societal changes.

On the upcoming regulations affecting the halogen lamps, Dorota Sławińska, Integrated Communications Manager CEE said, “The gradual ban on the halogen bulbs demonstrates a European wide commitment to energy saving and reducing our carbon footprint. Not only does this present an opportunity for households to benefit from reduced energy bills, it introduces consumers to the array of color, quality and design options that they may not expect when switching to LED. At Signify, our research shows us that no two homes enjoy the same lighting set-up. The use cases and preferences can vary substantially from room-to-room and home-to-home. Our LED lighting products and technologies mirror this uniqueness, allowing consumers to tailor lighting to their requirements and preferences.”

### **15 Obsolete Items of the Polish Home**

In honour of the halogen bulb ban, Signify has partnered with Deborah Sugg Ryan, to reveal the top obsolete items in the home from the past few decades. Casting her expert lens room by room, Professor Sugg Ryan has pinpointed items which have gradually evolved or been phased out – with the incandescent bulb taking a spot as the most recent addition to the home archive. Out of that list we have selected 10 items which were present at Polish homes.

#### **Entrance hall:**

1. Incandescent light bulb
2. Rotary dial telephone
3. Yellow Page

#### **Living room/Kitchen:**

4. Vinyl record player



5. Cassette tape player
6. VCR
7. Slide projector + slides
8. Carpet sweeper

**Bathroom:**

9. Waschboard
10. Mangle
11. Copper

**Office/on the move:**

12. Gameboy
13. Walkman
14. Typewriter
15. Floppy disk

**Entrance Hall**

**Rotary Dial Telephone**

The rotary dial telephone is a curiosity to modern teenagers who have grown up with push button phones and mobile phones with touch screens. Vigilant parents commonly installed a lock on the dial to prevent teenagers from making long, expensive calls. When British Telecommunications was privatised in 1984, a new range of phones became available for rental and outright sale and the rotary dial gradually became obsolete. Despite the obsolescence of the rotary dial and the two-piece handset, the phrases 'dial a number' and 'hang up' (meaning to replace the receiver on the base) persist today.

**Living room**

**Video Cassette Recorder aka VCR**

Available from 1963, the VCR reached mass-market success in 1975, with most people renting rather than buying what was a very expensive piece of equipment. The VCR tape brought with it some drawbacks, included a limited length resulting in recordings being abruptly curtailed, it becoming worn out and copy protect technology. By the late 1980s, more than half of homes had a VCR. DVD players gained popularity in the 1980s and 1990s but video recording persisted, despite DVD recording becoming available, until digital video recorders became more widely available and affordable.

**35mm Slides and Projector**

Available from 1936 for still cameras, 35 mm slides were popular with amateur photographers because of the cost of printing photos and the deterioration of color prints, which tended to discolor and fade. Setting up a slide show was a ritual; slides had to be loaded correctly into the slide tray, upside down and backwards. Worse still, the projector's bulb needed to be replaced frequently, and slide projectors were prone to jamming, overheating and even combusting. The 35mm slide started to fall out of favour in the 1970s when printing costs decreased and print quality improved, and was eventually made



obsolete by digital photography in the 1990s, to the relief of those who dreaded the invitation from their neighbours: “would you like to come around and see my holiday slides?”

### **Dining room**

#### **Carpet Sweeper**

One of the most popular non-electrical labour-saving devices was the mechanical Ewbank carpet sweeper, which first went on sale in Britain in 1889. The carpet sweeper consists of a small box, the base of which has rollers and brushes connected by a belt or gears. Carpet sweepers were particularly useful for the dining room, as the 1935 *Housewife's Book* said: ‘these handy little labour-savers should be used for a few minutes after every meal or wherever crumbs or litter make an appearance’. They remained popular into the 1970s, being produced in enamelled metal in bright colors.

“Although the vacuum cleaner has made them obsolete perhaps they should be due for a revival as a zero-energy appliance,” suggested Deborah Sugg Ryan, Professor of Design History and Theory, University of Portsmouth.

### **Home office**

#### **Portable audio cassette player (Walkman)**

The original Walkman portable audio cassette player was introduced in the UK in 1980 and changed the way that people listened to music. For teenagers, it replaced the large boombox. The lightweight and compact Walkman could be use whilst walking, travelling or jogging. By the late 1990s the cassette tape version was superseded by new digital technologies of CD, DAT, MinicDisc and MP3s. Apple introduced the iPod in 2001 but from 2017 has no longer been producing dedicated MP3 players. Like the PDA, the portable music player has been superseded by the smartphone. However, the ‘Walkman effect’ lives on with the smart phone, which has also been blamed for detachment, isolation, rude behaviour and narcissism.

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#### **About Signify**

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