

national
museum
wales
amgueddfa
cymru

Time for washing

Time for washing!

Washing clothes before the washing machine





Introduction for Teachers

Interactive digital resource for ages 5-7 about washing clothes before the advent of the washing machine.

A hands-on wasday experience is available at one of our Active Learning workshops at St Fagans National Museum of History, Big Pit National Coal Museum, The National Wool Museum, Drefach, and the National Slate Museum, Llanberis.

Booking details on final page.

Click on these symbols throughout the book:

-  Suggested activity
-  Reflective question
-  More Information
-  Discover the answer

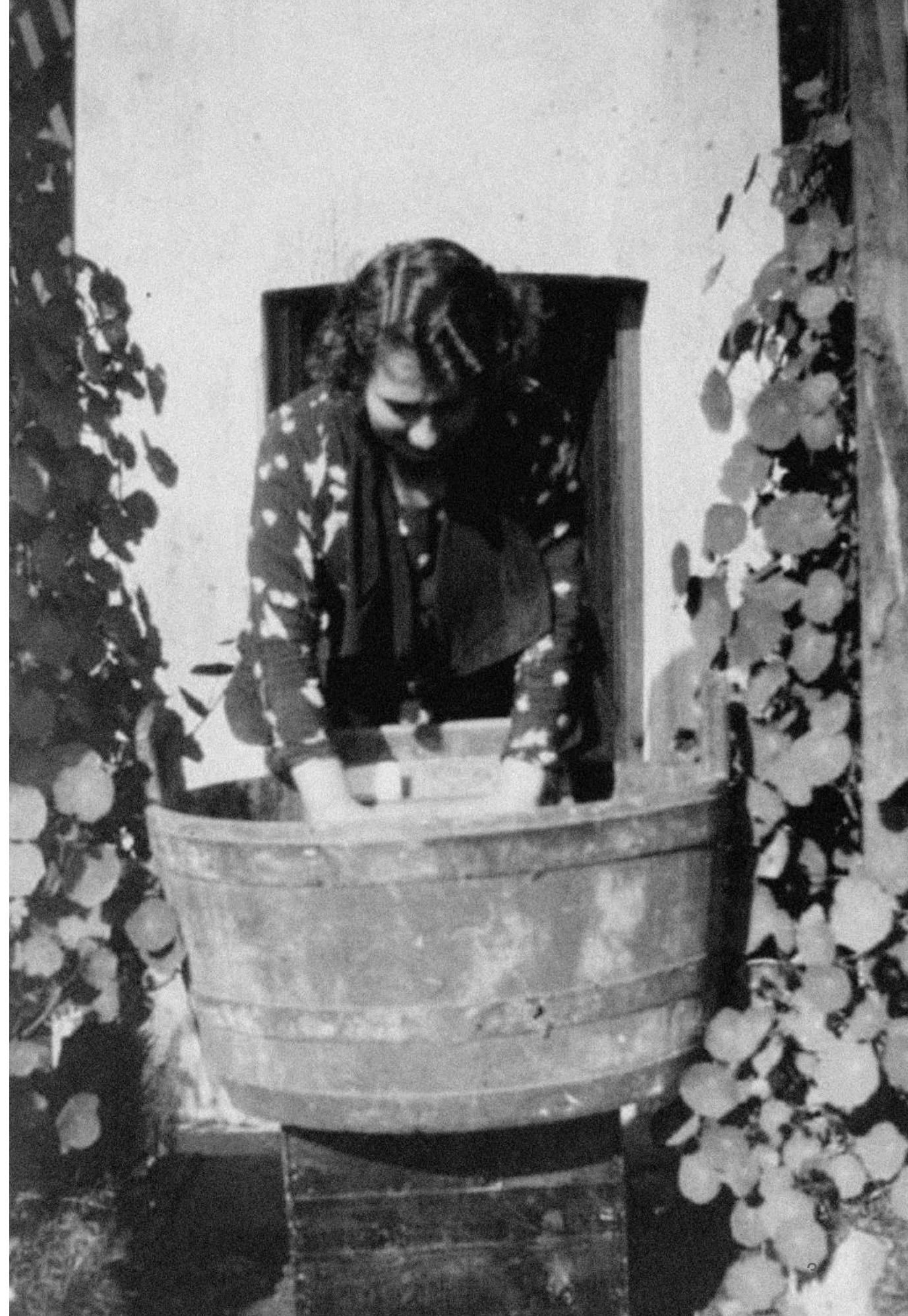
Curriculum links:

Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Literacy and Numeracy, History.

Beti Bwt a aeth i olchi,
eisiau dillad glân oedd arni;
tra bu Pegi yn 'mofyn sebon
aeth y dillad gyda'r afon!

This nursery rhyme tells the story
of when Beti Bwt went to do her
washing in the river. When she
reached for the soap – her
washing was swept away!

Let's meet Beti!





Hello!

I'm Beti Bwt.

I live in a time long ago.

I much prefer Thursday, when I get
to bake some bread...

But on Monday...
I have to do the washing!



Here I am all changed! I have two aprons, one made out of an old sack!

I wash clothes **EVERY** Monday, **EVERY** week.

I wash clothes on a Monday because on Sunday, I go to the chapel and then I get to rest all day. After resting, I'm full of energy and ready for the hard work on Monday!

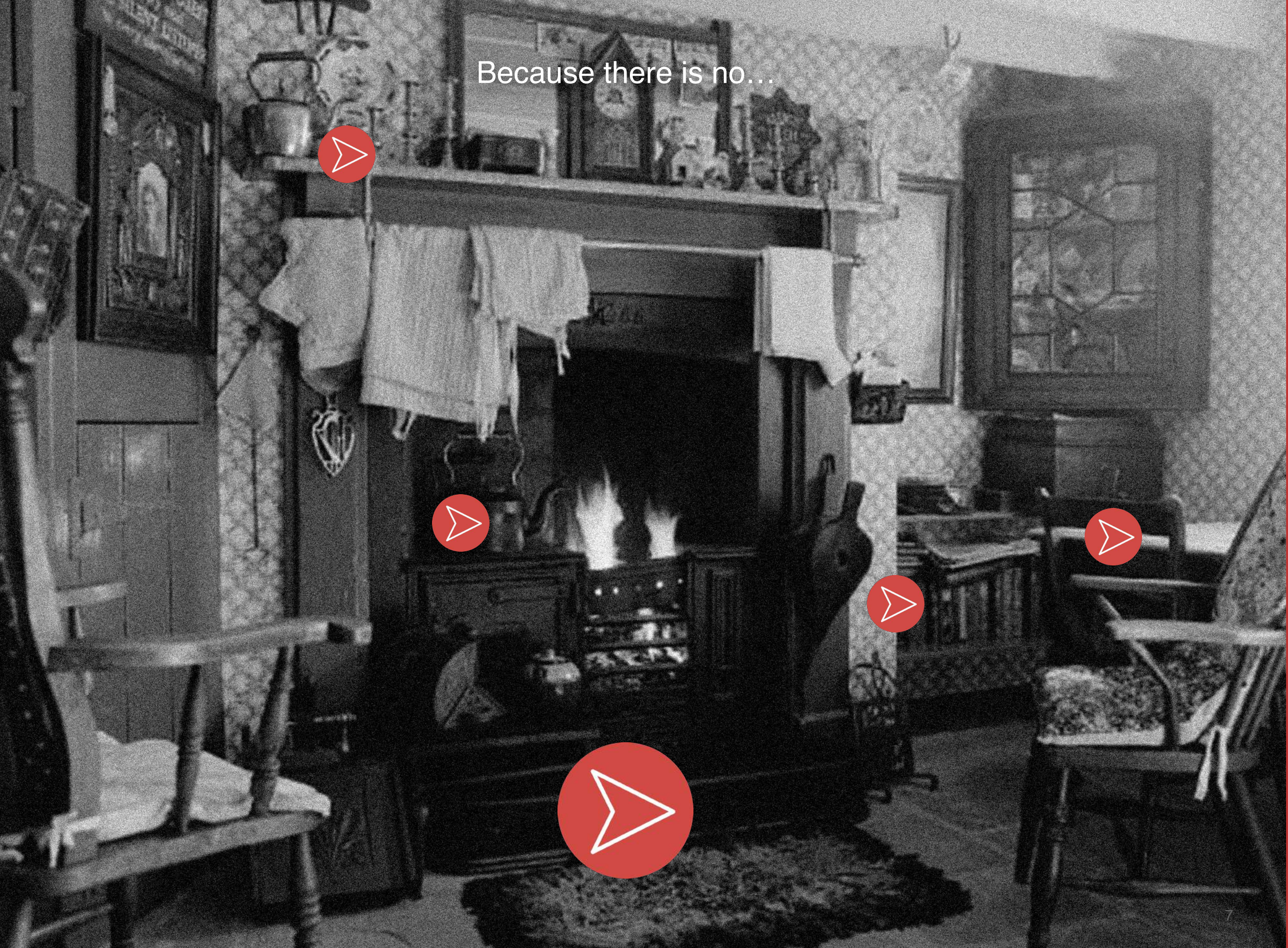
Let's find out about washing clothes a long time ago...

How about we begin by thinking how you wash your clothes.
Rub this washing machine to see how clothes were washed a long time ago!



Beti doesn't have one of these... but why not?
What's missing in Beti's home? Let's take a look...

Because there is no...





There was a certain order to doing the washing!

Try and guess what it was by dragging the type of



1

2

3

4

Working clothes, the dirtiest clothes, were the last to be washed. Who would wear these?

[Click here to see what work causes clothes to become very dirty...](#)



Here is a quarryman wearing fustian, a type of trousers that gets very dirty when slate is being cut.

Water




Imagine if you didn't have a tap in the house –
where else could you find water?

Let's play a game and guess the right name
from the letters under the picture!

RESTART

Score: 0



Beth yw hwn?

G

N

Y

F

F

N

O

N

N



Jennie at the Well.

1913

I have two buckets and a yoke. To carry the weight on my shoulders.



I bring two buckets back from the river each time. Time for a quiz!





Soap



*A bright smile
and the washing done*



No need to worry on wash-day when the kiddies come home, as long as you use Persil.

You'll be all over smiles because the washing will be over and done with, the clothes beautifully clean and undamaged, hours ago. Washing only takes thirty-five minutes in all—five to get ready (your job) and thirty to wash (Persil's job). Could anything be simpler?

In 3½d. and 5½d. Packets



Persil



Write for free booklet which tells how to use Persil.

JOSEPH CROSFIELD & SONS LTD. WARRINGTON

Per 47-31



Trying Duties !

SPARE THOSE HANDS

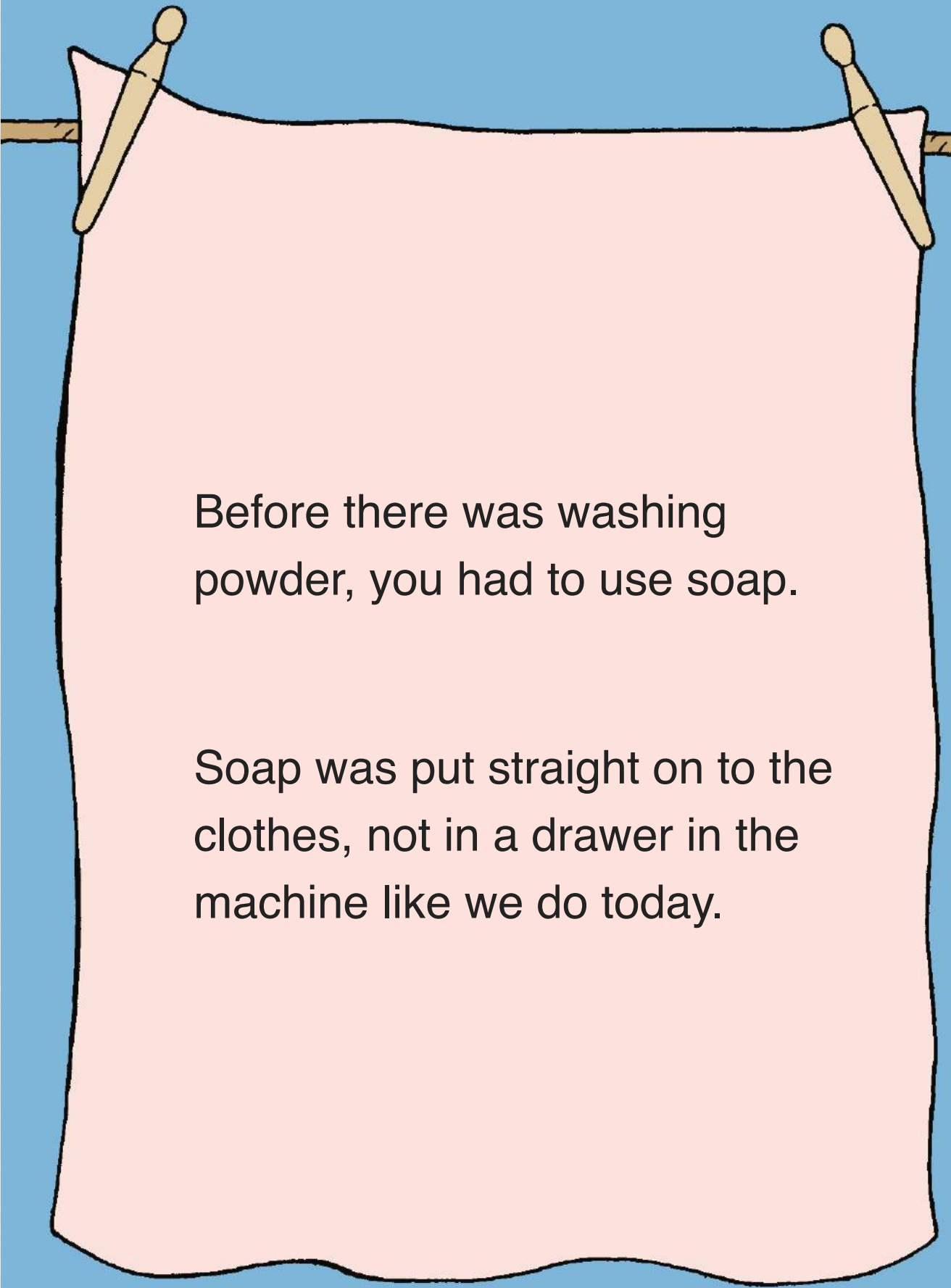
In and out of water, in all sorts of weather — no wonder hands suffer and become red and rough. But perhaps you use Fairy Soap? So rich, so full of gentle, skin-feeding Olive Oil instead of harmful rosin! If you do, your hands will remain soft and smooth, and you may snap white fingers at household duties—even on washday! Ask your Grocer for Fairy Soap.

6½d. per 1 lb.
Twin-Bar
(not 12 ozs.)



THOMAS HEDLEY & CO., LTD., Fairy Soap Works, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

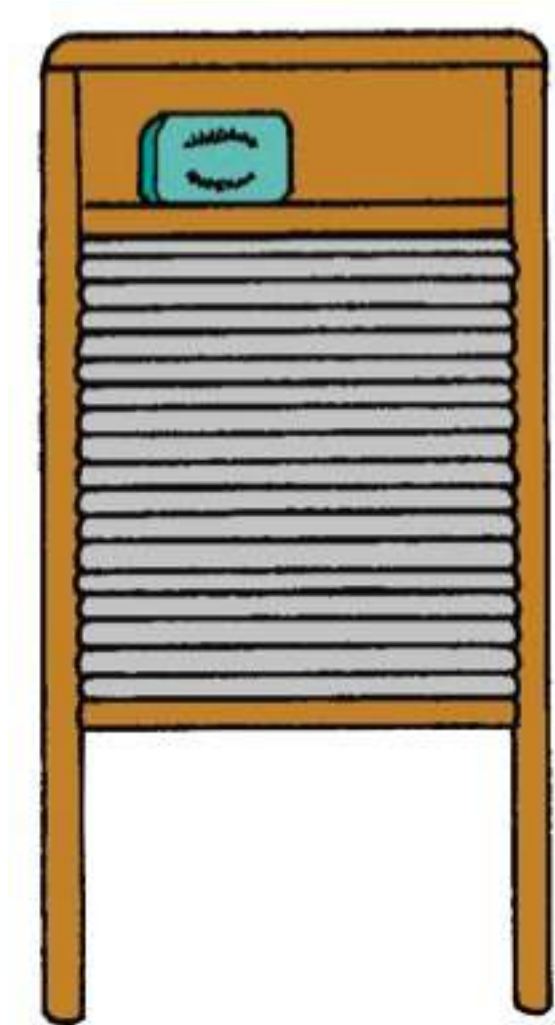
London Address: 77 Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4
C4



Before there was washing powder, you had to use soap.

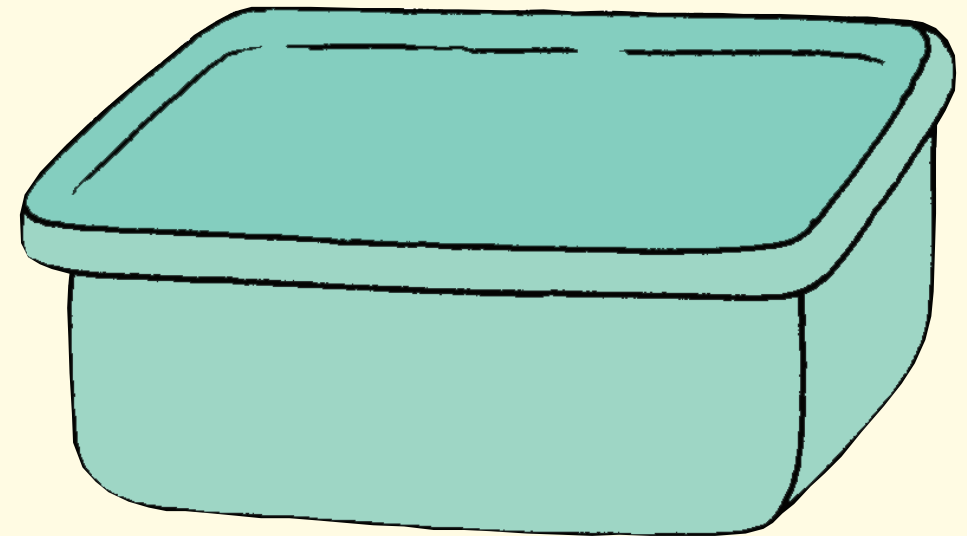
Soap was put straight on to the clothes, not in a drawer in the machine like we do today.

Here is the soap, safe on the shelf.



What would happen to the soap if it was in the water?

Click on the bowl to learn
the scientific word!





*"Couldn't be done better,
Mrs. Rawlins!"*



*"I'm glad you're satisfied, mum, they have
come up well, haven't they? It's the Robin
Starch. How easy Robin does the work!"*

Robin is the right starch for
everything—for big things
and little things. Use it for
cold starching and for hot
starching too.

You will see how smoothly

the iron glides over table-
cloths, lace curtains and sheets.
Robin gives a finish equal to
that of an expert laundress.
Ask your grocer for Robin
next time.

ROBIN Starch

RECKITT AND SONS LTD. HULL AND LONDON



Starch was used to
make clothes harder, so
that they kept their shape better and
stayed cleaner for longer.

Tablecloths and aprons were
starched with **hot** water. Starching
with **cold** water was quite a skill.
Sometimes, someone with those
special skills had to come to your
home to do it for you!

Then to rinse, Beti used a little bit of Blue.

But why Beti?



Listen to Elizabeth Ebenezer talking about using some Blue.
Oh dear, some people's clothes would turn blue with too much!

“There was a danger that some would use too much, you see. You'd see some people's clothes on the line – Oh, they were so blue! And once the blue colour got into the calico, you couldn't for the life of you get it out. Some would be too heavy-handed with that. The whole idea was to make the white whiter.”



Equipment





Right, I have soap and hot water, this is the equipment I need.



Can you match the correct name with the correct picture?

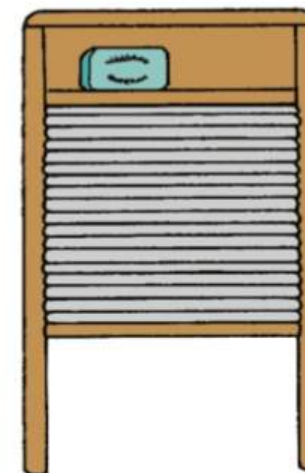
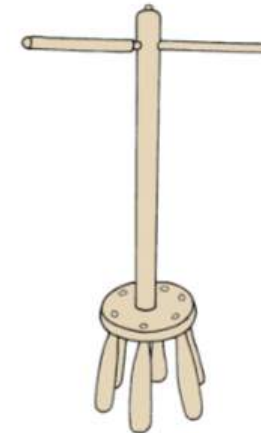
Wash Tub

Dolly Tub

Mangle

Dolly

Scrubbing Board



What equipment is in this picture?





You have to scrub hard, up and down, up and down!



This photo of somebody scrubbing hard was taken in 1900 in Brechfa, Llandeilo.

This rubs off the dirt and makes sure that the soap goes all the way through the clothing.

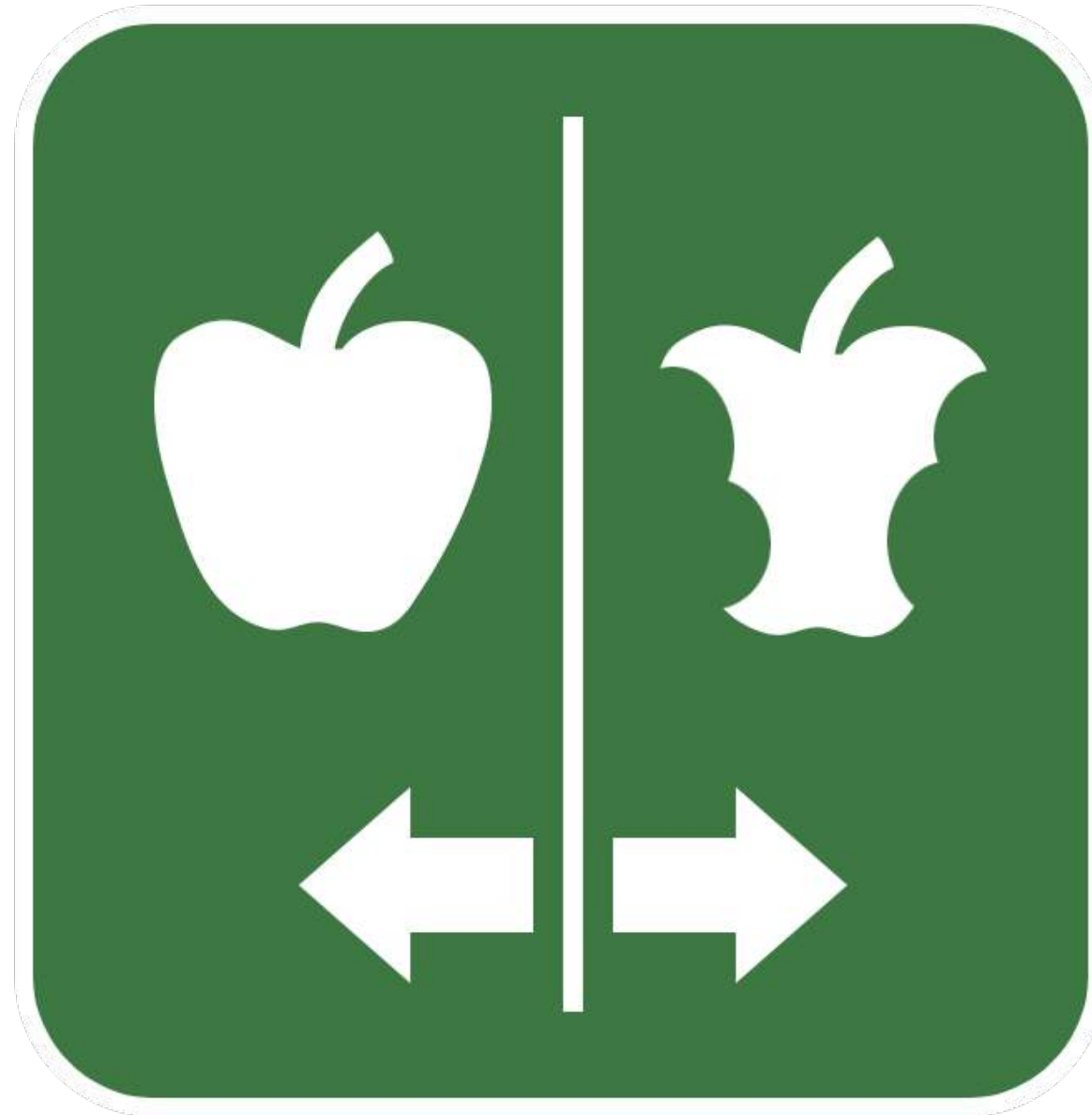


Here is Miss Kate John from Merthyr in the 1940s scrubbing using a scrubbing board. Rubbing the clothes up and down the scrubbing board.

Isn't it hard work!

This is a dolly! Does it look like a dolly? Some people thought it did.

Slide across the dolly to find out why...





Beti makes the dolly go up,
down, round and round over and
over to make sure the clothes
are clean.

Up, down, round and round!
Up, down, round and round!

Drying and Ironing





Now it's time for the drying. The first step is to get rid of the drips by using a mangle.

If you turn the handle so that it goes in the same direction as the finger on the clock – what do you call this direction?

Click to see if you're correct.



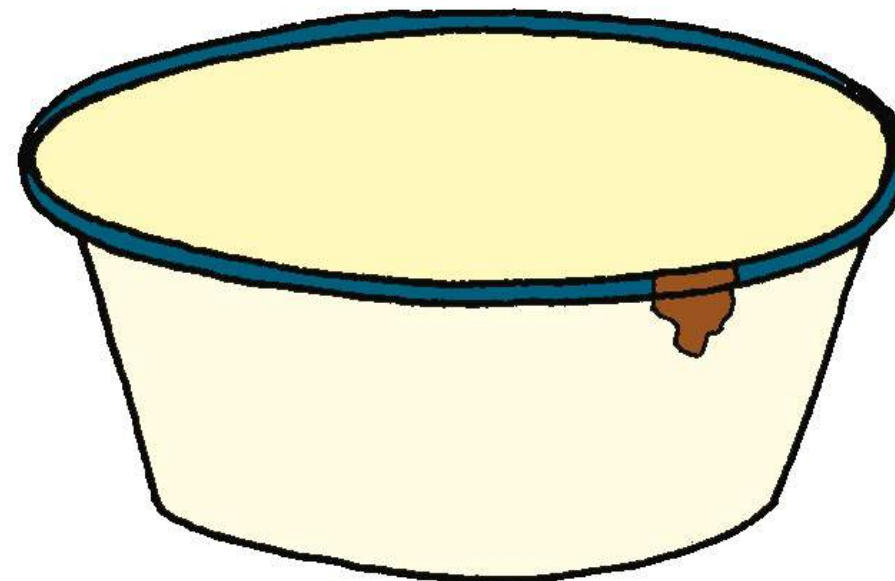


Beti is careful when she uses the mangle, she could lose a finger!

Beti collects all the water from the mangle in the bowl and will recycle it to use it for some cleaning.



Then the clothes are ready to be put on the line...





This is what Beti uses to hang up the washing on the line. Pegs!

Children used to make their own toys a long time ago out of the things they could find around the place, like pegs. What would you make out of a peg?

Here is a photo of clothes on the line.



Here's Esme Rees in Treorchy in the 1960s, getting a little bit of help!



The sun was useful for drying clothes, but it was also useful, like the Blue, to keep the clothes white, by bleaching them.

Here is Elizabeth Davies bleaching clothes by laying them out on hedges in Aber-banc, dyfed in 1935.



This is a peg doll. Have you ever made one?



Have a go at this game to make a digital peg doll! Drag and drop the clothing on to the peg to dress it.





When the clothes are dry,
it's time for the ironing.
But without electricity, the
iron had to be heated on
the fire.

The iron needed to be
tested to see if it was hot
enough, but without
touching it!



To test if the iron was hot enough, people would spit on the iron like Afanwen Davies is doing in this picture.

Hot water turns into steam, and if the iron is hot enough then the same thing will happen to the water in the spit.



And this is how the ironing was done, to make sure there were no creases. Creases would be called crow's feet!

Washing Machine





Here is an early washing machine from the 1950s, a mangle and tub in one.

On the next page there are more pictures of old machines. These machines are even older and were used before electricity!

Here are some more old machines...





And that's it! Now the clothes are all washed and dried, and ready-to-wear. Beti will do it all again next Monday!

How do you think Beti feels?
What do you think Beti is saying at the end of the wash?





Come and have go doing the washing!

St Fagans National Museum of History

Phone (029) 2057 3424 or email learning.stfagans@museumwales.ac.uk to book <https://museum.wales/stfagans/learning/foundation/>

National Slate Museum
(for a week in February, annually)

Phone (029) 2057 3702 to book
<https://museum.wales/slate/learning/foundation/>

Big Pit National Coal Museum

Phone (029) 2057 3650 to book
<https://museum.wales/bigpit/learning/foundation/>

