

# ABOUT : 1950's

- 1952** - Elizabeth II was crowned monarch of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon. She was 25 years old and ascended to the throne following the death of her father George VI. The coronation took place at Westminster Abbey, London.
- 1953** - Off the back of the work of Rosalind Franklin and Maurice Wilkins, James Watson and Francis Crick were the first scientists to discover the double helix structure of DNA.
- 1955** - Clarence Birdseye patented frozen fish fingers in 1927, but it took until 1955 to devise a way to produce them commercially. Within a decade they accounted for 10% of British fish consumption and in the 50 years thereafter, 15 billion have been sold in the UK alone.
- 1958** - The first full length motorway was the M1, opened in 1959, however prior to this, in 1958, a stretch of motorway which bypasses Preston in Lancashire was opened, which is now part of the M6. This is regarded as the first motorway in the UK.
- 1958** - Returning from a European Cup tie, The Manchester United team took off in a chartered plane from Munich, only to crash shortly afterwards. 8 players and 3 team staff were killed. They were part of a potentially great Manchester United side, known as the 'Busby Babes'.
- 1959** - The 'Mini' car - designed by Sir Alec Issigonis for the British Motor Corporation. It was voted the second most influential car in the twentieth century in 1999.

In 1953, Mount Everest was conquered by Sir Edmund Hillary and in 1951 there was a large event called the Festival of Britain, which introduced new materials like formica, plywood and plastics, as well as new styles in ceramics, fabrics and furniture. Along with the Queen's coronation, these events whetted peoples appetite for the future. However, at the same time, rationing remained in place until 1954.

## THE 1950's - *more information...*

### FURTHER INFORMATION

A typical family in this period saw the man go out to work and the woman be home maker. The average weekly wage was £10 per week and Rock 'n' Roll music was imported from America. 10% of homes had a telephone, 33% a washing machine, 15% a fridge and 2/3rds had a black and white TV. The decade also saw the start of the 'space race', with Russia launching the Sputnik satellite. Harold Macmillan, the prime minister, summed up the emerging optimism with the words, '*Most of our people have never had it so good*'

**If you want to find out even more about the 1950's, use the links below :**

<http://primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/war/1950s.html>

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/fifties-britain/>

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