

News release

17 October 2014

People's history project seeks to crowd-source domestic objects

A brand new exhibition at the [National Print Museum of Ireland](#) will explore the representation of housewives in 1960s Ireland as seen through the pages of women's magazines. Dr Ciara Meehan, curator of the exhibition and lecturer in history at the University of Hertfordshire, is inviting people to loan objects or make a donation towards the funding of [Modern Wife, Modern Life](#).

At the start of the twentieth century, manuals on how to be a good wife were widely available in Ireland. With the emergence of new technologies, women's glossy magazines came to replace the traditional manual - as did the advice given to newly married women and housewives in the 1960s. The concept of being an 'ideal wife' became closely bound up with being a 'modern wife'. The message was clear: a 'good wife' was not just beautifully presented, but also used all the latest modern devices. Her home – especially the kitchen – was an extension of her appearance and reputation. 'Modern life' and 'modern wife' became blended into the one ideal.

Dr Meehan said: "This is an exciting opportunity for Irish women and men to contribute to the creation of a people's history. During the life of the exhibition itself (August-October 2015), there will be also an opportunity for people to record their memories of the 1960s. Both the objects and these oral testimonies will subsequently be used as sources for the book I am researching on Irishwomen in that decade."

Anyone can be a part of this history project by loaning any items from the 1960s which fit into one of the six themes of the exhibition; print culture, advice for the newly married wife, beauty and presentation, new technologies in the home; women behind the wheel and the wife who works. Rewards for contributing to the cost of producing the exhibition include reproduction images, a limited edition booklet and a private curator's tour.

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For more information, please contact Dr Ciara Meehan on Irish mobile number: +353(0)863729574, UK office number: +44(0)1707285650, Email: c.meehan2@herts.ac.uk
Website: <http://modernwifemodernlifeexhibition.com/>

Notes to Editor

Photograph:



About the University of Hertfordshire

- *The University is the UK's leading business-facing university and an exemplar in the sector. It is innovative and enterprising and challenges individuals and organisations to excel.*
- *The University of Hertfordshire is one of the region's largest employers with over 2,425 staff and a turnover of over £234 million.*
- *With a student community of over 25,100 including more than 2,900 overseas students from 120 different countries, the University has a global network of over 175,000 alumni.*
- *It is also one of the top 100 universities in the world under 50 years old, according to the new Times Higher Education 100 under 50 rankings 2014.*
- *For more information, please visit www.herts.ac.uk*

About Dr Ciara Meehan

- *Ciara is currently a lecturer in twentieth century history and associate programme tutor for the Humanities Programme at the University of Hertfordshire.*
- *She is the author of [The Cosgrave Party: a History of Cumann na nGaedheal, 1923-33](#) (Royal Irish Academy, 2010) and [A Just Society for Ireland? 1964-87](#) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).*
- *Graduated from the School of History at University College Dublin with a BA in 2003 and a PhD in 2007 and subsequently joined as academic staff.*