

# Good old days

## Were they really that good?

It's incredible how long fallacies last, even in the new age of information and knowledge. One such fallacy that many hard pressed, teenage-raising parents claim is that everyone is working harder than ever with no time to scratch themselves.

In fact we actually work only half the hours each week (32.5 hours on average) that our forebears did in 1800. The total hours of paid work in a lifetime has remained steady - we just spread it over 50 years now, not 25 (as it was when life expectancy was just 38 years). **So we all work half as long each year, but for twice the number of years!**

### Yesterday's lifestyles

in the Industrial Age - 1865 to 1964

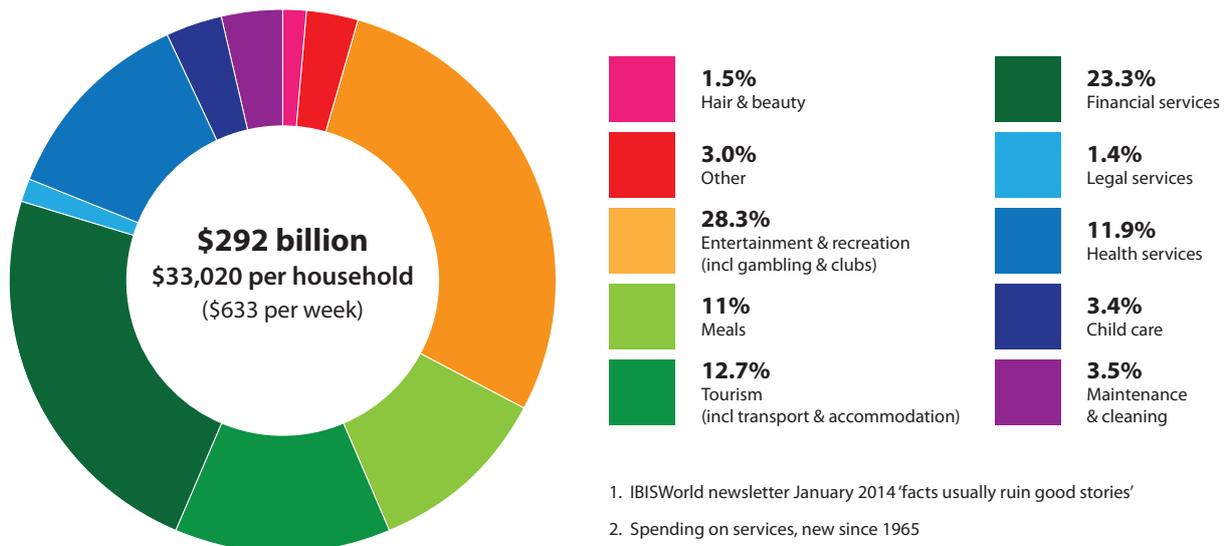
- Dad at work, mum at home (with 3 to 6 kids)
- Long careers for men, and the gold watch
- High street shopping (grocer, butcher), no centres
- Do-it-yourself everything, in and around home
- The corner pub (weekdays), sport (Saturday arvo), church and the midday roast (Sundays)
- Cinema, radio, a piano (maybe) and cards as entertainment
- Holidays (Christmas) by staying with relatives
- Electricity, the telephone, washing machines, household gadgets, mum's sewing room, dad's shed and the BBQ

### Do you think we've come a long way in the last 50 years?

A quick glance at lifestyles in the Industrial Age that ended in the mid-1960s just might remind us that we are a lot better off today. And a further glance at where our money goes – with a large chunk on entertainment and leisure activities – shows we are outsourcing many of the tasks and activities that were once done at home.

### So were they really the 'good old days'?

Household outsourcing in the New Age<sup>2</sup>  
2011 - 2012



1. IBISWorld newsletter January 2014 'facts usually ruin good stories'

2. Spending on services, new since 1965