

Media Outlet: Telegraph.co.uk

Date: 11.11.13

DUU: 3,108,353

URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/festival-of-business/10436774/Chim-Chim-Kerching-The-return-of-the-chimney-sweep.html>

The Telegraph

Chim-Chim Kerching! The return of the chimney sweep

Chimney sweeps enjoy a boom as Britons return to the traditional wood fire amid soaring energy bills



Chimney sweeping has come a long way since the thirties with the introduction of spinning brushes and hi-tech camera technology to find blockages. Photo: Miller/Getty Images



By **Rebecca Burn-Callander**, Enterprise Editor

11:00PM GMT 09 Nov 2013



Follow

2,791 followers

145 Comments

Thousands of Brits are dusting out their fireplaces in response to soaring energy prices creating an unexpected boom in chimney sweeps.

Recent energy price hikes have added 10pc -15pc to gas and electricity bills across the country and a furious British public has reacted by switching off radiators, calling in the chimney sweeps, and stoking up the wood fires.

Kyran Ryan has been sweeping chimneys in the Coventry area for seven years. The last year has seen the largest single rise in call-outs of his career. "Every time the gas bill goes up, demand goes up," he said. "I'm working 12-13 hours a day at the moment. I don't physically have time to fit all the customers in."

Media Outlet: Telegraph.co.uk

Date: 11.11.13

DUU: 3,108,353

URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/festival-of-business/10436774/Chim-Chim-Kerching-The-return-of-the-chimney-sweep.html>

The Telegraph

He's not the only sweep to be inundated with work. Nelson Draper, founder of Drapers Chimney Sweeps says that business is up more than 12pc this winter. "It would be more," he said. "But I also work for a lot of people who want to have existing gas fires removed and chimneys opened up. I have to wait for a gas-registered engineer to remove the fire before I can start work."

Both sweeps are members of online tradesmen RatedPeople.com, which has reported a 34pc increase in fireplace-related projects this year.

According to the National Association of Chimney Sweeps, Britain is experiencing the largest boom in chimney sweeping since Victorian times. "It's been remarkable," said president Martin Glynn. "When we started NACS in 1982, there were just 30 members. Today we have 540 members nationally."

NACS provides training for wannabe sweeps at its dedicated training centre in Stone, Staffordshire. In the since months to June this year, 25 new sweeps achieved NACS accreditation. "We have had to run additional training courses to cope with demand," added my Glynn. "All sorts of people are retraining as a sweep, from builders and roofers to an aerospace engineer. We have quite a few lady sweeps coming through too."

Chimney sweeping has come a long way from the bad old days when little boys were sent up the stacks. The recovery of the industry in the last three years has brought about huge strides in technology. Rotary brushes that spin around removing debris are used by over 60pc of sweeps these days, replacing the standard rods and brushes. And hi-tech video technology is used to search flues for birds nests, dead squirrels and build up of tar and camphor.

The resurgence of the sweep is not only dependent on sky-high energy prices, however. "While one market, mostly middle-aged people, is concerned about rising bills, there's also a younger generation installing fire places because its fashionable," explained Mr Glynn. "All those TV shows and magazines that show home makeovers seem to be all about open fires."

Media Outlet: Telegraph.co.uk

Date: 11.11.13

DUU: 3,108,353

URL: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/festival-of-business/10436774/Chim-Chim-Kerching-The-return-of-the-chimney-sweep.html>

The Telegraph

Housebuilders across the country are picking up on this passion for real fire. Ben Babington is director of residential development at Jackson-Stops & Staff, which has 42 offices nationwide. "We're suddenly seeing a trend for chimneys," he said. "With new homes there's always a new trend, be it audio visual technology, or details in bathroom or kitchen. Fireplaces are absolutely the current trend. A log burner is a much more popular focus point for a living room than a plasma TV screen these days."

Simon Jehu, founder of Waterstone Homes, which specialises in bespoke, upmarket homes and currently has 18 developments across South East Wales, has also noticed a renewed appetite for the open fire: "We have chosen to include chimneys and wood burning stoves across five of our developments," he said. "It is no secret that energy bills are rising and we want our customers to have an option to use a chimney when heating up rooms."

According to Hetas, the industry regulatory body, at least 175,000 households are installing a wood burner each year, which is five times more than in 2007.

Chesney's is a national supplier of woodburning stoves. It sold more than 8,000 units across the UK and sales this year are up 35pc on 2012. Paul Chesney, founder and MD of Chesney's says: "A wood burning stove is energy efficient as you can turn the oxygen feed to the fire down for a slow long lasting burn or up for a fast and furious flame. The logs last much longer and the heat output is substantial, making it a far more efficient and affordable way to heat a home."

The effects of Britain's newfound love for fire can be felt all the way down the supply chain. Marcus Fincham runs a farm in North Hampshire. Two years ago, he started selling logs as a sideline. This business now accounts for 5pc of turnover and Mr Fincham predicts that figure will triple within three years.

"Customer used to buy the odd bag," he said. "The logs would just sit by the fireplace and weren't used that often. Now, the same customers are buying huge cubic metre bags of logs. They buying in bulk and using more. I have to take on more staff to cater to the demand."