

Lessons in ageing: *it hits you when you least expect it*

David Stevenson, Mole Energy



You know you've grown up when: you stop buying the cheapest wine on the shelf; you prefer Radio 4 to Radio 2; you regularly start sentences with the phrase 'When I was young...'

While you were waiting to become an adult, you might have bought a house, got married and had children. Inside, you don't feel a day older than 21.

The renewable energy industry is just the same. While we've been patiently waiting for 'A Home Solar Revolution' in the UK, it's happened – right under our noses, or more precisely up on our roofs. Here's proof.

It's not unusual

Ten years ago, solar represented only a negligible percentage of the power generated in the UK. Since 2006 our total solar capacity has soared, so that surprisingly, London now generates as much solar power as Madrid. With the rate of solar installations doubling in 2018, close to one million UK homes now feature solar panels.

By 2021, up to 40% of our energy as a nation could be generated by solar. So how did solar become so popular, so quickly? It was partly thanks to the introduction of the Feed-In-Tariff (FIT) in 2003, which gave families and businesses a reason to invest in solar. Partly thanks to the falling cost and rising quality of solar panel technology, which led the Government to end the FIT in favour of the new Solar Export Guarantee (SEG) in 2019. And partly thanks to our increased focus on sustainability as a society, renewable energy provider Bulb grew faster than any other UK business in 2019. A large and

growing proportion of new homes now include panels as part of the Government's Standard Assessment Programme (SAP) rules around sustainability.

Today, solar panels are the new norm for UK homeowners, thanks to their efficiency, reliability and cost-effectiveness. And their popularity is set to grow further still, as sustainable technology becomes even more integrated into our homes and lives.

Solar systems

While the UK solar industry was busy growing up, it had children. Lots of them. Some made life with solar a little easier and more efficient. Like the Eddi – an inexpensive unit that diverts unused solar power to heat up water in your cylinder.

Other solar innovations have had a more significant impact in the home.

Take battery storage. In 2010, battery-powered homes were an oddity. Today, they're a reality for many homeowners wanting to cut their energy bills by using energy generated by their panels to power their homes day and night. More than half of the homeowners who buy solar panels from us now choose to add a battery to their system. It's easy to see why: batteries like the Tesla Powerwall 2.0 can be installed inside and out, look great and can be controlled via smartphone. Most significantly, a combined battery/panel system now costs around the same amount as the panels alone, only seven or eight years ago.

Electric cars go one step further than battery storage, promising their owners not only a sustainable home, but a sustainable lifestyle. With UK registrations of all-electric vehicles (EVs) overtaking hybrids for the first time in 2019, analysts are predicting 2020 to be the 'Year of the EV' – with the range of different models on the market set to nearly double. Many of the homeowners we speak to say their current diesel or petrol car will be their last, as they will install charging points like the Zappi alongside their new batteries and panels to prepare their home for a fully-electric vehicle.

Solar, so good

Since Mole Energy was founded in 2010, we always hoped to reach the point we're at today: whereby solar is part of everyday life in the UK and not just a bright idea. But now it's happened, even we're surprised. While we were busy, the world changed. And we changed with it.

If that doesn't deserve a glass of the second-cheapest red on the shelf, I don't know what does. Cheers!

VAT at 5% on home solar
Home solar from Mole Energy remains at 5% VAT

Despite new VAT rules on solar from 1 October 2019
4kW systems installed from just **£4,995***



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