

## WE DIDN'T HAVE THE GREEN THING BACK THEN

Yesterday after shopping in our local supermarket, I was in the queue at the Check Out, and heard when the young cashier suggested to the much older lady that she should bring her own grocery bags, because plastic bags are not good for the environment.

The woman apologised to the young girl & then sighed, "We didn't have this 'green thing' back in my earlier days."

The young clerk responded, "That's our problem today. You folk didn't do enough to save our environment for future generations."

The older lady said "Ah yes you're right -- our generation didn't have the "green thing" in its day." She sighed then continued:

Back then, we returned milk bottles, lemonade bottles & beer bottles to the shops. The shops then sent them back to the plant to be washed, sterilized & refilled, so those same bottles were used over & over, thus REALLY were recycled. But we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Grocery stores put our groceries into brown paper bags that we reused for numerous things. Most memorable was the use of brown paper bags as book covers for our school books. This was to ensure that public property (the books provided for our use by the school) were not defaced by our scribbles. Then we were able to personalise our books on their brown paper bag/covers. But, too bad we didn't do the "green thing" back then.

I remember how we walked up stairs because we didn't have an escalator in every store or office building; walked to the grocery store & didn't climb into a 300-horsepower machine every time we had to go 200 yards.

. . . But she was right. We didn't have the "green thing" in our day.

Back then we washed the baby's nappies because we didn't have the throw away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine burning up 220 volts. Wind & solar power really did dry our clothes back in our days. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not always brand-new clothing. . . . But that young lady is right; we didn't have the "green thing" back in our day.

Back then we had one radio, in the house -- not a TV in every room. And if anyone did own a TV, it had a small screen the size of a handkerchief (remember them?), not a screen the size of a football pitch. When cooking we blended & stirred by hand coz we didn't have electric machines to do everything for us. When we packaged a fragile item to send by post, we used layers of old newspapers to cushion it, not Styrofoam or plastic bubble wrap. Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn gasoline just to cut the lawn. We used a push mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity., . . . , But she's right; we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

We drank from a tap or fountain when we were thirsty instead of using a cup or a plastic bottle every time we had a drink of water. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, & we replaced the razor blade in a razor instead of throwing away the whole razor just because the blade got dull. But we didn't have the "green thing" back then.

Back then, people took the bus & kids rode bikes to school or walked instead of turning their mothers into a 24-hour taxi service in the family's expensive car or van, which cost what a whole house did before the "green thing"..

Oh and we had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 23,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest leisure park.

. . . . But it so sad this current generation laments how wasteful we old folks were just because we didn't have the "green thing" back then? . . .