Some background information re the attached article.......

The McKenzie family (Mr & Mrs & children - Betty & Ken) moved to Briar Hill in the late 1930's.  They lived on the corner of Britnell's  (Mountain View) Road and River Street.  At some stage, two blocks of land ....with frontages to Gladstone Road, were cut from the original block, to enable Betty & Ken to build houses & live there with their own families.  Betty lived at number 44 Gladstone Road with her husband & 4 children, Ken lived at number 46 Gladstone Road with his wife & children.  Betty & family moved from that property around 1960.

Dawn Bennetts

Betty McKenzie (Adams/Joyner) memories.

In my young days electricity was a wonderful thing and many people still used candles, kerosene lamps, hurricane lamps etc. laundries (washhouses were outside and were fuelled by a copper with sticks of wood etc some may have used coal or briquettes

it was usual to have a bath Sundays (carrying water from the copper inside) and all family used the same bath water. You did not have large wardrobes of clothes and the clothes you took off were washed the next day along with sheets towels etc. there was no "non-iron' clothes in those days. the 'whites" used be blued with a bluebag (also useful for bee stings) and several items had to be starched (men’s white shirt collars, tablecloths, etc. Most of Monday was taken up doing this apart from getting meals and other household chores. city people had gas stoves. but others had to use wood or coal /briquettes. There were no vacuum cleaners or TV, but Radio came into its own, and everyone talked about Dad and Dave etc the next day. Movies were coming into their own, up till around the time I was born 1929 there was Black and white silent movies then there was talkies (called them flickers or going to the flicks) - the city had movie theatres but in country towns (like Greensborough) chairs were arranged in country halls. My brother Ken was traumatised after seeing the witches in The Wizard of Oz (he is nearly 84 now).

Airplanes were in their infancy ,and airplane holiday travel wasn’t popular until about 1960's

When ironing you used to get a tomato sauce bottle with holes in lid to sprinkle water on the clothes to make ironing easier, nothing was wasted. There were no nylon stockings in those days. but other stocking were used when too far gone to mend (for making rugs with, or cut up into strings to use as hair curlers for ringlets).

Mum and auntie Mabel and probably others bought sugar and flour in hessian bags. The bags were used as aprons (with a bit of embroidery or scraps of material for pockets and strings) or even children’s trousers. Us kids played "jacks" out of Sunday’s forequarter roast bones, and stilts out of jam tins. We didn’t have many toys but made our own games, of course there was blackberry picking and mushroom gathering, and fishing for yabbies out of dams.

Most of the time Mum made her own jam, pickles, chutney and preserved fruits. Mum used to make her own bread and had a yeast plant growing in the kitchen and sometimes a ginger beer plant. When at Briar Hill we had cow, chooks, ducks and grew our own vegies. Lucky in the wartime when meat, butter, petrol, clothes, tea was all rationed. Not many had cars then but some had a trunk at back of car (gas producers) burning charcoal. Mum made butter, cheese (that white soft cheese), used to smear eggs with Vaseline to keep over the winter when fowls were not laying. She dusted the potatoes with something. You always mended socks, and turned collars in men’s shirts.

The lavatory was outside in Briar Hill, the 'night cart’ (who used to come in the day to change pans over) and got it from a back door (like doggy door), and you were always worried in case he came when you were using it. It always smelled of phenyl to deter blowflies. Two of these lads come to the dances at Montmorency and when you met in the barn dance the smell was unmistakeable.

We walked everywhere for miles , no other means of travel, but sometimes rode our bikes to dances at Eltham.

We had a good view over Greensborough and during wartime you could see searchlights scanning the sky for enemy planes,

Briar Hill school was only two rooms which housed up to 8 grades one grade each row. Teacher had to teach 4 grades and "bubs" and left when we got our merit certificate at 13 or 14 (8th grade). Only rich kids went to uni as you had to pay. (I left in 6th grade and did the last 2 years at J H Boyd Domestic (near where Crown Casino stands) and went to Stott’s Business College in Russell Street Melbourne) before going to work in an office in Little Lonsdale Street Melbourne when I was just 14, am sure we turned out smarter than the kids of today with years longer at school.

I got the strap when 8 from a male teacher for chewing gum (at Richmond Central) - these days he would be had up for assault!

We rarely saw a doctor but if you needed one they came to your home.

We depended on home remedies which it seems to be less harmful than medications used today. we all got the usual childhood diseases but I think were immunised against diphtheria which killed a lot children in the 1800s. We had an epidemic of infantile paralysis (polio) which maimed a lot of people and children in 1930's.

 By the time Dennis was about 3 months old in 1956 a vaccine was available and so I had all my children vaccinated.

When we eventually got an ice chest (after Coolgardie safe) the ice man used to deliver ice in horse and cart, (this was 1930's and 1940s) as did the baker every day deliver bread , and milkman these occupations are now obsolete.

It's a sad world today, the manufacturing business is overseas, even meter readers obsolete. everyone wants to be bosses. Technical schools are closed. Young people want everything NOW instead of having to save for it. Huge houses, expensive cars, overseas holidays instead of raising children. The most valuable thing you can give anyone is your time. Where will it all end??