I feel like a ‘rant’ every time I hear how lucky the teenagers of the 1960’s were and how well off they are as pensioners! Let’s put this in context – many of us were born either in WW2 or shortly afterwards and our parents had firstly lived through the 1930’s recession and they lost many of their friends and family in that war!

Post war Britain was no wonderful time, mainly living in tenement buildings (myself next to a bomb site). No bathrooms (local public baths only option) rationing, food coupons etc. Eventually parents managed to get a Council house if they were lucky. I moved to Borehamwood at nearly 11 years old – sadly they had not built the schools that would educate those youngsters and I spent the best part of a year out of school.

Leaving school at still under 15 I was privileged and my parents paid for a place at a training school for 3 weeks to learn to be a Power Samas Operator (precursor to computers). So from aged 15 I travelled by bus, train and underground up to and around London to work. Earning about £4 per week, travel costs £1.50, paid Mum £2 for food and keep and had 50p per week to save for buying a record and coffee in the local coffee shop.

Met my eventual husband just before I was 21 and we then saved each week to get a deposit for a home. No more buying records and just a once a week trip to the local pub to meet with friends. All other evenings were spent doing ‘homework’ such as typing up envelopes (yes that’s what mail order companies used then), making plastic jewellery, putting elastic in baby’s waterproof pants etc. 2 years on we had the deposit for a house.

So moved out of London to a village near Colchester where by then we took a salary cut of 50%. We both worked hard and made a list of what we would want before setting out on offspring. Decided the list was too big and within 1 year our eldest son was born. No car, no frills, brand new house furnished with parents old suite and carpet from Dad’s shed + good old square TV that didn’t work from neighbours of my parents were out furnishings with a card table and deck chairs for our dining room. Upstairs initially my single bed (dip in the middle so one of us fell out when turning over) and the waxed paper that had covered the vehicle a relative had loaned us to move our few bits of furniture provided by parents and neighbours ended up being our bathroom flooring!