

Back in my day...

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Those four words – ‘back in my day’ – have always seemed somehow off to me. Is the speaker telling us that her/his day is over, consigned to the past?

And beyond the strict meaning of the words, aren't they also laden with a certain point of view? Often, when someone begins with those four words, I brace myself for a description of how things were done (well, appropriately, morally...) at some time before the present and at least an implicit exhortation that we should go back to a (simpler, wiser, harder working...) time.

Of course, sometimes the opposite is true. The speaker may be marveling at some (invention, attitude, tool...) that would have made life (easier, better, fairer...) had we had then what we have now.

But my basic heartburn with the phrase is the assumption that my day is over. It's not.

My day is today. And tomorrow. And whatever tomorrows I have remaining. It's up to me to determine how they're defined.