

Greenmount – April 2007

The month started off with a reasonably sunny, warm spell and this meant more gardening. The back lawn was starting to recover slowly, as was I and the seed I put down last month was just starting to grow. It was just warm enough to eat out on the patio at lunchtime on a couple of occasions, wearing woolly jumpers, of course.

On Sunday 1st April, we paid for a pitch at the Cricket Club car boot sale and made about £45 on the day, so the junk at the back of the garage has depleted by about 30% and we could afford to eat again for the next couple of days.

On Tuesday 3rd April, we visited my cousin, Linda, in Sheffield. I have not seen her since I was about twelve and I tracked her down as part of my family research. It was really nice to see her, her husband, her daughter and her son's two young daughters. Unfortunately, her son and his wife could not be present. We had a long chat and on parting, Linda said she hoped to see us again during the next forty-six years.

Wednesday and Thursday of the week saw me helping Matthew with the development of his sunken garden again. Matthew has finished the steps down and he and Carrie have painted the walls white to give it a Mediterranean look. Matthew and I have constructed a joist frame for the decking and laid just over half of it. He is finishing it with Carrie as my manager says I am needed at home for other jobs.

On Easter Sunday Jenny prepared a meal for nine – Matthew, Carrie, Carrie's parents, Bob and Marie, our very good friends and neighbours, Mike and Launa, Rachel and ourselves. This was an amazing feat, particularly since our table only seats eight.

My Canon EOS 600 camera, which was having trouble releasing its shutter (most men will know this is a sign of its age), seems to have fully recovered without treatment. I am pleased to have a working camera again but this no longer affords me the excuse of buying the Canon EOS 5D digital camera for which I have been longing. I shall have to long a little longer.

We have had a quotation for a new fitted kitchen from our preferred supplier; Simpson's of Greenfield Mill, Colne, who made most of our lounge and all of our bedroom furniture in solid oak, have provided a total estimate of £35k, not including the new UPVC full-height window/patio doors – and this does not include solid oak carcasses. Simpson's having gone forth to multiply, we are now looking at alternative suppliers and I have started the work myself. Progress will be slow but at least I shall have the satisfaction of knowing I did it my way and saved a whole lot of cash in the process.

On 9th April we motored north-eastwards to spend four days in and around Scarborough for a short break and to celebrate our 34th wedding anniversary (on 31st March). I tried to book the previous week but all the accommodation I contacted was either far too expensive or fully booked and I later discovered this was probably due to a Jazz festival week. This is probably just as well, since I doubt that Jenny's idea of a holiday is to sit listening to Jazz for four days – unfortunately.

The journey there was, surprisingly, quite fast, with little traffic congestion – until we reached the end of the dual-carriageway section of the A64, or, to be more precise, about two miles before that point. Once we had eventually crawled to the two-way traffic section, we picked up speed again and made the trip in a total of about three and a half hours. If only people learned to drive properly.

During the afternoon, we strolled around Scarborough and the harbour and found an excellent Italian restaurant for our evening meal. My first impression was that Scarborough had become quite a dirty town, with lots of litter. It occurred to me that we should implement the Singapore penal code for such offenders.

As we retired on Monday night, I developed a raging temperature, which turned out to be what I thought to be the start of a nasty influenza infection. By Tuesday morning, my temperature had dropped somewhat and we followed our plan of walking the 7½ miles along the coast path (Cleveland Way) south to Filey. We thought the 20 miles to Bridlington was a bit too far. The plan was to have a look round Filey, eat at a very good Chinese Restaurant there that had been recommended to us and then catch a late bus back to Scarborough. A quick check with the bus station resulted in Plan B. The Tourist Information Office in Scarborough had given us a bus timetable that was six months out of date and the last bus was 18:22.

As luck would have it, arriving back in Scarborough, we found a Chinese restaurant not fifty paces from the bus stop with virtually the same set meal for two at £3 less than the one in Filey. Well done Scarborough!!

By now my influenza virus was becoming well established and I resolved to seek medication the following day.

On Wednesday we explored more of the town, which I was beginning to see in a better light, collecting some paracetamol and throat lozenges in the process. The castle beckoned and our two-and-a-half hour tour, at £4 each, with free personal audio guide, was well worth the effort.

That evening, we eventually found an Indian restaurant, on the basis that a good hot curry would dispatch my bad throat, cough and aching chest. And so it did, for a very short time.

While pondering outside the restaurant, we were accosted by three people who had just alighted from a taxi and were going inside. They told us they eat there often and recommended it. The chap, who had a bald head very similar to that of the proprietor, assured us they were not related, a fact supported by the difference in skin colour. Apparently this chap turned out to be an Elvis impersonator, his wife was his manager and their daughter was shortly appearing in a production at the Spa theatre. I didn't know Elvis was bald.

By Thursday, my condition had worsened and we decided to take the car to have a look at Robin Hood's Bay and Whitby. The former was something of a disappointment and is just a quaint old fishing village. It would be very nice to live there but I cannot see the attraction for holidaymakers unless it is used as a base for exploration up and down the coast.

We visited Whitby Abbey, complete with crucifix, wooden stake and garlic. Having refused to pay the £4.20 each entrance fee, we had to be content from taking photographs from a distance. Needless to say, we didn't find Dracula's coffin.

Whitby reminds me somewhat of the coastal towns and villages of south Cornwall and is, being divided by the River Esk, a little like Loe. There is much more to see and do there than we could fit into the limited time we had allowed and we have resolved to go back and spend a few days exploring Whitby and the coast to the north. We have booked four nights in Whitby commencing 28th May.

We did contemplate walking from Scarborough to Whitby but it is 20 miles and that is a long way for a coastal walk, especially when one is not in good condition. I do keep thinking it would be nice to walk the coast of mainland Britain. I know it has been done before but it does appeal to me.

On returning to Scarborough, we ate, once again, at the Italian restaurant we had found earlier. The food is excellent, the service is very good and the prices are reasonable.

By Friday the 13th, I had almost lost my voice and it was all I could do to pack the car and drive home. In any case, there was a heavy sea mist affecting the east coast and the plan of driving down to Spurn Point would have been pointless because we wouldn't have been able to see anything. The weather earlier in the week had been fair, with sunny spells and a cool breeze.

My first port of call on arriving back home, in record time (about two hours), with no delays, was the local GP. I was ushered in to see him immediately and having described my symptoms to him, he asked me what I thought it was. I told him I thought I had influenza and I thought I needed some anti-biotic medication. He listened to my wheezing chest and back, announced I needed some anti-biotic capsules and promptly wrote out a prescription. He also advised that I should take paracetamol to ease the symptoms and keep my temperature down, something I had been doing since Wednesday. The morale of this episode is that if you are registered at Greenmount surgery, not only do you need to undertake a self-diagnosis before booking an appointment but you also need to know how to treat your illness.

The result was that I was taking 10 mg of Losec each morning to regulate my stomach acid, two Paracetamol tablets about every six hours to relieve the symptoms of Influenza, one 500 mg and Amoxicillin every eight hours to kill the infection and Strepasil throat lozenges as required to ease my sore throat. I couldn't say much but I didn't half rattle.

I did muster enough strength to cut the back lawn and tidy up the back garden on Saturday 14th after spending about four hours sorting out the intricacies of Showshifter on my desktop PC. Jenny rose early to attend another car boot sale, making another £45 or so on the day and, having had little sleep during the past week due to my coughing and fetching Rachel from Bury after a night out at 1 am this morning, she was somewhat exhausted.

My cough, chest discomfort, bad throat and nasal congestion continue as we approach the

end of the month and I am now considering the possibility that it is not influenza but due to a repeat of my acid reflux problem, a condition whereby stomach acid (fairly concentrated Hydrochloric Acid) seeps upwards into the oesophagus and causes inflammation. The Losec is supposed to keep that under control but it may be that I need a larger dose. I am going back to see the GP on Tuesday, 1st May. Meanwhile, I am drinking lots of water while the beer remains in the fridge. Perhaps this should be the other way round.

My health has not stopped the ongoing TLC required by the garden or the indoor plants and our conservatory is starting to look more like a greenhouse. Nor did it prevent us from cycling to a local country park, walking round the reservoir and cycling back. At least I managed to stay upright this time.

The extremely warm, sunny weather has brought the barbecue season forward and the air at week ends is full of charcoal smoke, which does nothing for my chest condition.

I have performed extensive research on the Family Tree this month and the work is ongoing. I have now traced my father's family back to 1816. The best web site I have found for this is www.ancestry.co.uk. The BMD index search is free and the charge for other records, such as census data on a pay-per-view basis is reasonable.

On a sad note, Jenny's sister, Pamela, died on 22nd April, aged 64 and this came as quite a shock after what seemed to be a recovery from her recent illness, of which we all feared the worst at the time. Out of seven children in the family only three remain, the eldest, Winifred, aged 80 and the two youngest, Wilfred, 62 in May and Jenny who is 21 again this year for the umpteenth time and doesn't look it.

That's about all for this edition so our love to all until the same time next month.

Ken and Jenny Dearden