

Greenmount – April 2014

On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April, Jenny went off to a coffee morning with Gwen in aid of a children's hospice charity, while I undertook the domestic chores and wandered around cyberspace.

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April was a little more eventful. We took the car into Ramsbottom, having just missed the hourly bus and potted round the charity shops, which, on this occasion, proved fruitless. Breaking with our tradition of shopping for organic food, we paid a brief visit to Aldi for a few items for the Beaver Healthy Eating Activity Badge. Is there a contradiction there somewhere?

Returning to an overcast Greenmount, we delivered the latest copy of our village newsletter, church notices and other local leaflets to residents on our designated patch before coming home for lunch.

The receptionist from the surgery telephoned to tell me the doctor had prescribed some tablets for me and I was to take these instead of the two 20mg Losec tablets previously supplied. I went round to the chemist to collect three boxes of pills, two of which were antibiotics and the third..., yes, 20mg Losec capsules. The antibiotics had to be taken three times a day at regular intervals and the Losec twice a day at regular intervals. Not only that but one of the antibiotics had to be taken with food; the Losec was best taken on an empty stomach or with food. As regards the other antibiotic, it was anybody's guess.

Back at home, I sat down and worked out a schedule. I would take all three tablets at 8 a.m. before or with breakfast as appropriate. I would take the two antibiotics at 4 p.m. before/with a small snack. I would take another Losec at 8 p.m. before or with the evening meal. Finally I would take another two antibiotics before/with a small snack at midnight. I concluded I wasn't going to get a lot of sleep for the next week.

The good news was that after the first dose of antibiotics at 4 p.m., much of my pain and discomfort disappeared almost immediately.

On Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April we concentrated our efforts on the Beaver administration work, followed by my pottering about cyberspace again.

We went grocery shopping on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> April, lunching at Waitrose, from where I also collected two traditional, stainless-steel bicycle bells I had ordered earlier in the week from John Lewis. Ding-dong, as Leslie Phillips used to say in *The Navy Lark*.

On returning home, I fitted the cycle bells so that people would hear us coming and I also replaced two of the outside light bulbs at the back of the house for the umpteenth time so we could see people coming. That, I thought, was enough physical activity for the day and I settled down to put in all of the TV recordings for the week.

I was planning on some energetic, outdoor activities on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April but the grey skies gave way to showers and I didn't fancy cycling or washing the car in the rain and gardening was out of the question.

I was back in church at 2:30 with Andrew to test the cable I had repaired and fix the other one. The repaired cable provided another challenge when the plug did not connect to the socket pins properly. Inserting the plug pushed the socket connector back inside the casing and we determined this was due to a missing, vital piece of plastic. That was fixed by stuffing some insulation tape inside the cover before securing it again.

Back home, I decided to have another look at the microphone Andrew had asked me to try to mend some months ago. I had bought a new mini-jack plug for it and asked the man at the TV repair shop in

Ramsbottom to solder it on the cable for me but the microphone did not work when I tried it in my desk top computer and when I examined the plug inside, the sheath wire had come unsoldered. At the time, I considered the wire to be too flimsy, comprising very thin fabric fibres coated with copper, the type one used to find in telephone cables, for those who used to take the old-fashioned, black, Bakelite telephones apart.

Since I was having a run of success, I decided to stretch it a bit further and tackle the microphone again. Nothing ventured....

I managed to solder the inner core without a problem, using my knees as a vice to hold the soldering iron. It's a good job it didn't slip. The outer sheath took three attempts to get it to secure to the connector on the jack plug and I couldn't decide whether that was because the plug was of poor quality or the solder was not very good. Nonetheless, I did get it to work.

Things were looking up.

On Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April we made the obligatory, almost weekly, trip to Asda at Pilsworth for a few bits and pieces and, of course, some wine.

The highlight of the day was the village meeting in the evening, held, this month, in the primary school.

I was ready in good time for Amy's Skype call from Brisbane at 12:15 on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April and we chatted for about an hour, discussing her forthcoming visit to us at the end of May.

Around that, the day just seemed to fly by, doing some Beaver preparation work for the last session of the spring term the following day.

On Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April we went grocery shopping as usual, calling at the dentist to book an urgent appointment for a lower, front tooth I had managed to chip a couple of days earlier. I had tried to telephone but I had been forwarded to the answering service and I decided to go to the surgery in person, discovering that my dentist was on holiday for two weeks. I managed to obtain an appointment for the following Tuesday with one of the other dentists in the practice. Since my tooth was not giving me any pain, the delay was not a problem and I could have had an appointment the day before but I had something else planned.

We spent the week end and the following Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, at the Old School preparing the electrical equipment for the jumble sale and selling it.

We did have a slight variation on Monday morning, taking the rubbish from the jumble sale to the local refuse recycling facility and then going on to Heywood to deliver the money Jenny had collected from her Beavers, for those choosing to attend a District Cub and Beaver fun day at the local Ashworth Valley Camp site, to the organiser. They say that variety is the spice of life.

Matters seemed to be improving on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April. We awoke to blue skies and sunshine and I was feeling much better after my prolonged stomach problems. I tackled the back garden, tidying up the borders and cutting the grass, before going to the dentist to have my front tooth repaired.

Although the bit I had chipped off the enamel was quite small, the gap left felt like a gaping quarry. The dentist managed to patch it up without anaesthetic (for me, not him) and it took three or four layers of some sort of compound bound together and to the tooth with something that tasted like superglue. This was preceded and followed by a good sanding, initially to make sure the tooth was clean and finally to smooth down the artificial extension and to prevent me looking like a lop-sided Dracula.

Jenny took this opportunity to call at the post office at Holcombe Brook for two “get well” cards, one from her and one from a friend, Sheila, who was partially sited and unable to go to the shop herself. The cards were for another of Jenny’s good friends, Lynn and on returning home we went down to deliver them. John invited us in and we chatted with Lynn and John for about an hour, Lynn back home from hospital and recovering at home.

On Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April it was another nice day and, following a late start, I finished off the back garden, removing all the dandelions from the grass and feeding the grass and borders. After that, I tackled the common land on the side of the house, cutting and strimming the grass and tidying up the edge by the footpath, trying to make it look reasonable after the local council employee had made a complete mess of it by trying to cut it when it was too wet. Not only had his appliance skidded on parts of the grass, leaving muddy patches and scraped the grass of some of the more uneven parts, leaving them prone to weeds, but he had, as usual, been unable to cut the more sloping parts and the grass on these was very long indeed, not having been cut since last August, before I hurt my ankle. I packed up about 5 p.m., with the border by the drive still to weed and the ivy on the garage wall still to cut back to prevent it growing into the garage.

While I was doing that, Jenny was enthusiastically cleaning the house when a loud speaker, stacked in the conservatory for the car boot sale, fell on her foot. That, despite the application of Aloe Vera and a pack of frozen peas, left her in agony for most of the evening and night.

Rain was forecast on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April and it was dull and cold again outside. Jenny was still suffering with her foot, not having had much sleep and she went round to the chemist for some witch hazel. I didn’t do a lot, recovering from the previous day’s feverish activity. I did manage to feed the back lawn and borders before the rains came and to tidy my desk though.

On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April we went grocery shopping as usual, with yet another deviation to Heywood on the outward journey to the same location as last time to deliver a cheque for one of the Beavers to attend the Ashworth Valley Fun Day. A cheque had been included in the previous consignment but it was made payable to the wrong organisation and this was not spotted at the time by someone who shall remain nameless.

After lunching and shopping at Waitrose, we called at Matthew’s house on the return journey to deliver some post and then at Tesco in Bury for a few items we could not get elsewhere.

On returning home, I was thinking about washing the car but that’s about as far as it got.

I was determined to something productive on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April and we made an early start.

I finished off gluing the handle for my right-hand desk cupboard back together after someone managed to ram the dining room sliding patio door into it, breaking it into three pieces for the umpteenth time.

After that was securely clamped, I helped move a few items about in the garage and put up one of Jenny’s car boot tables so she could start sorting her stock for the following day’s trading. That made it possible for me to reach the items I needed for washing the car and I had no more excuses for not doing so. I was well into that activity when Matthew and Carrie arrived, Matthew deploying his new driving licence, having taken control of the vehicle. They went inside to chat to Jenny while I finished off the car and tidied up and I joined them for the last twenty minutes or so before they headed off home for lunch and we had ours.

I spent the afternoon polishing the car and managed to remove all of the stubborn black and brown bits from the alloy wheels as well, although that did take some time. Jenny vacuumed and cleaned the

interior and all the windows inside and out while she was waiting for me to help load the car with the car boot stock ready for the following day, having spent most of the afternoon sorting out what to take. We finished loading the car by 6:40 p.m. We had also arranged to take Rachel's car in case I needed to come back home and Jenny took advantage of that to load yet more stock.

Amazingly, Jenny had also found time to cook a lasagne for tea and feed the cats at 5 p.m.

We were up at 5 a.m. on Easter Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> April and at our pitch by 6:30 a.m., which is just as well because all the pitches had been taken by 7 a.m. Despite the number and variety of stalls, there were very few people about and most of them were only browsing. The very cold and cloudy weather and the supermarkets being closed did nothing to attract the crowds and we packed up early, about 1 p.m., having cleared about £60 on the day's trading, which I did not consider to be particularly good. Still, it could have been worse and at least it didn't rain.

We were too tired to unpack the car on returning home and, apart from Jenny cooking tea, we relaxed to recover from the early start and standing in the bitter cold for most of the day.

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April was somewhat hectic.

After breakfast, Jenny made some scones to take round to the 'café' at the Antique and Collectors' Fair in the Old School and we whizzed round with those and some DVDs and books one of the other car-booters had donated to us the previous day, at about 9:30 a.m. The doors had been opened at 9 a.m. so we were somewhat late.

Jenny was supposed to be helping on a stall and we still hadn't unpacked the car, which we needed to prepare for our holiday the following day. Jenny found a job taking the money on the door and I pottered around the records, CDs and DVDs, chatting with Mike and Frank before moving to the book stall, where I found an interesting book on nuclear waste management and four small books on various walks. I took over from Jenny while she went for some lunch and she returned the favour. I remained on the door until 3 p.m., after which entry was free and Jenny went to help on one of the bric-a-brac stalls. We left shortly after 3 p.m.

Back home, we unpacked the car boot stock and stored it away in the garage. I then put the car together ready for packing for our holiday.

We were ready to leave by 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April and we headed for Whitby, stopping for a packed lunch just before Pickering and arriving at The Lansbury in Hudson Street at 2:30 p.m. Luckily we managed to find a parking spot just outside our lodgings and we were shown to the same room we had the last time.

The weather was not good in Whitby, being overcast and damp and it had been very misty and wet crossing the North Yorkshire Moors on the way.

Our first priority was a cup of tea and then we went for a stroll round the north cliff, calling at the Pavillion Theatre, where, we discovered, it was the last night of the comedy play "Nobody's Perfect", performed by the Whitby Amateur Dramatic Society. We purchased two tickets and went off to have tea at The Dolphin, just across the bridge. The lamb Tagine we both had was very nice but could have been a little warmer.

The play was funny and performed as well as any play I had seen, amateur or otherwise. We had a drink in the theatre bar afterwards where we had the opportunity to exchange a few words with members of the cast before returning to our room at 11:30 p.m. for yet more tea and biscuits before turning in. It had been a good and enjoyable day and, for once, we hadn't cared about the weather.

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April was a better day, with sunshine but still very cold with the on-shore northerly or north-easterly wind. We kept nice and warm by walking down the coast path to Maw Wyke Hole and then turning inland up the Coast-to-Coast path towards Hawkser. We turned right along the Cinder Track, back towards Whitby and stopped at the Trailways Cycle Hire facility at the old Hawkser Station for a cup of tea.

We were hoping to obtain a sandwich there for lunch but the chap who ran the business informed us that his food business had been severely curtailed by some officious twit going, I believe, by the name of Andy Muir, who had interpreted the National Park's rule book in such a way that providing food, including breakfasts for his paying guests for whom he provided accommodation, was not an integral part of his business. This, of course, had nothing to do with the fact that his immediate neighbour, living in the other half of the station buildings, was a local councillor who, after moving in alongside the established business he ran, gave the impression she was not enthusiastic about living next to it, from which I deduced she was a member of the Conservative Party. So much for encouraging small businesses to expand and develop. This one had contracted by dismissing two full-time and one part-time members of staff.

We survived on fruit and the odd snack bar we had with us, turning right just before the viaduct over the Esk valley, following the road back to Whitby on the east side of the river.

We had tea at the Duke of York, an excellent Seafood Ploughman's salad and we retired early. The eight-mile, round walk had not done my right ankle as much good as I expected it would and my Achilles Tendon gave me a good deal of pain throughout the night.

On Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April we walked to Sand's End along the promenade as far as the road up through the golf course and then followed the Cleveland Way along the coast road to the café by the beach, where we had lunch on the veranda overlooking the sea. We had planned to walk along the beach but the tide was coming in and it was quite high.

The day had started quite sunny but as we sat at our table in the persistent, cold, on-shore breeze, we watched the mist as it slowly engulfed the Abbey in the distance and then crept along the shore towards us. It was just like a scene from "The Fog".

We walked back along the beach in the eerie mist as the tided receded, again as far as the road up through the golf course. We waited for an hour or so for the tide to go out far enough for us to walk the rest of the way to Whitby on the beach but it soon became clear this was not going to happen any time soon and we took to the promenade once more.

Back on the west cliff, we sat on a bench by the whalebone, overlooking the harbour, for an hour or so, watching the mist roll inland, in the bitter cold that accompanied it. The sun tried its best to shine and finally made it as we returned to the warmth of our room, having covered about six miles, for a cup of tea and to change for our evening stroll and meal at Moutrey's Italian restaurant.

The meal was very good. The starter portions of garlic mushrooms were almost a meal in themselves and Jenny wisely chose a small Margareta Pizza as a main course. My Fiorella Di Mare was delicious but too much for me and I could not finish it all.

As we had to pass it on the way back to our residence, we called at The Dolphin for a brandy.

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April was very misty and cold again. We decided to go to Scarborough on the bus.

We walked down to the north bay and from there along the north bay and marine drive to the town in the south bay, in the mist and rain, stopping occasionally to watch the rough sea. We walked up through

the town towards the station, calling at the lovely Nomad Café on the way, expressing our delight that it was still there and thriving, serving fair trade and, when available, organic, food. Jenny had a delicious Falafel followed by Walnut, Banana and Parsnip (yes, parsnip) cake and I had the biggest BLT I had ever seen, on granary bread, naturally.

We were back in Whitby for about 6 p.m. and booked a table at The Hatless Heron on Church Street for 7:30. That was very good as well, although they were in the process of changing their wines and the choice was somewhat limited. The house wine turned out to be most acceptable.

When we booked our holiday, we had not realised that it was Whitby Goth week end and on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April we pottered round the shops, admiring the many and varied costumes.

We bought Rachel a Jack-o-Lantern T-shirt and we managed to track down one of the elusive and discontinued, Chamelia, Gingerbread-man, bracelet charms for Rachel. The shop in Whitby did not have one but a telephone call to its other shop in York found one and we arranged to collect it on the way home.

We met up with my niece, Julie and her husband Keith for lunch. They were in Whitby for the Goth week end (see the [picture gallery](#)). We ate at the Monk's Haven café on Church Street. The sandwiches Julie, Keith and I had were fine but Jenny's baked potato with beans was cold, hard and partially black, with only a tablespoon full of beans on top. Jenny did not mention this until afterwards, so we made no complaint. We shall not go there again and I do not recommend it.

After lunch, we walked round the rest of the shops and sat on the quay for a while, watching the pleasure boats come and go. The cold wind eventually forced us to retreat and we sat on a bench near the harbour, further upstream. It was still very cold.

We ate early at The Four Seasons and it was very nice, if a trifle expensive. Still, it is worth paying that bit extra for good food and good service and I would recommend it to those who can afford it. We did not have much because it was so early, having booked tickets for the play "Dracula – You'll Die Laughing" at the Coliseum Theatre.

Contrary to the publicity issued by Scarborough Borough Council, the Pavillion Theatre is NOT the only theatre in Whitby. The Coliseum is an excellent facility and has a cinema screen as well as hosting live performances and other activities and, what is more, is self funding, unlike the Pavilion Theatre, which is partly funded by the Council. Both theatres are worthy of your support.

It does have to be said that the Pavillion is a more "conventional" theatre, whereas some of the productions at the Coliseum are "unusual" and this was no exception. Nonetheless, it was funny, well performed and entertaining, with some audience participation, including a small part for a lady picked from the audience.

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> was, again, dull, misty and drizzly. The plan had been to walk along the coast path to Robin Hood's Bay but we took the Cinder Track instead, considering this to be the safer option, calling, once again, at Trailways for a cup of tea.

For those not familiar with it, the Cinder Track is the old railway line from Whitby to Scarborough, axed by that idiot Beeching.

We lunched at The Old Bakery tea rooms in Robin Hood's Bay where the food and service was very good. Unfortunately, they did not have a customer toilet and customers have to use the public toilets either at the top of the hill or at the bottom of the hill. I chose the latter.

Now I was under the impression that EEC regulations required all cafés, restaurants, pubs, etc. to provide public toilet facilities. A quick bit of research suggests not and almost certainly, such a rule could not be imposed retrospectively on established businesses. The question is, would you feel comfortable using an eating establishment that did not provide such basic facilities? It also poses the question, what do the employees use? It is obvious from the outside that The Old Bakery is built above a stream....

Having visited the local public facilities that were out of soap, we wandered down onto the slipway with the tide well up and still coming in with some fury.

Retracing our steps up the hill, we went the extra mile up to the old St. Stephen's Church with its unusual box pews and its three-tier pulpit before walking back down to the bus stop to catch the X93 back into Whitby. The weather had not improved.

Back in Whitby, we went in search of the advertised Whale Watch boat but couldn't find it where it was supposed to be and we retreated to our accommodation for a rest, a shower and a cup of tea.

We ate at the Duke of York again. They had run out of our first choice – chicken pie so Jenny settled for Cod and I had Scampi. Very nice it was too. They had also run out of our choice of sweet, so we passed on that, reflecting on our saving in calories.

It was time to retire for tea and biscuits and an early night after the day's exertion.

On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April, we were determined to find the Whale Watching boat and enquiries led us to discover that Whales are rarely seen in local waters and then not until August or September. Not that we intended going on a trip on this day anyway.

We caught the 11 a.m. North York Moors Railway train to Goathland (aka Aidensfield) to renew our acquaintance with Heartbeat country and our first stop was at the Goathland Hotel (aka Aidensfield Arms) where I managed to knock an empty glass off a table with my rucksack, the glass smashing into countless pieces on the tiled floor. We settled down and I had a half pint of a honey ale, expecting it to be quite sweet. I was disappointed. Jenny was not impressed with the menu for lunch or the interior so we left to potter round the shops. I stayed outside with my rucksack!

Jenny almost bought a Heartbeat T-shirt but the shop only had small and extra, extra large sizes left of the limited edition. The lady in the shop went into the back to see if they had any more medium sizes tucked away, without any luck. What a surprise, I thought.

We lunched at the café at the far end of the row of shops and it was warm enough to sit outside in the garden at the rear in the company of some very friendly birds, especially when the very nice food arrived.

After our brief meal, we walked down to the church and this time we had time to go inside to take some pictures.

We caught the 4 p.m. train back to Grosmont (Hogsmeade in the first Harry Potter film) and changed for the 4:38 to Whitby, arriving back at 5 p.m. The journey gave me plenty of photo opportunities.

We went back to our residence to dump the rucksack, have a cup of tea and decide where to go for tea. We settled on the Indian Tandoori at the station. We had been told it was good and it was, although Jenny did not enjoy her meal as much as I, having made the wrong choice of dish, a mild chicken tikka balti rather than a medium one. Jenny also suggested it could have contained more chicken. I would not describe it as the best Indian restaurant at which we have eaten, merely as satisfactory.

We returned for an early night and ended up watching TV until 10:30.

We left immediately after breakfast on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April and made a half-hour detour up the coast road to Redcar to see my sister, Barbara. Julie, Keith and Robert came round and we stayed until noon.

We lunched at Turner's Mill in Redcar and very nice it was too, before heading for the A19 to York. Having missed the A19 turn off from the dual-carriageway, which is very badly signposted, indicating Scarborough, not York, we reached the A1 and had to go round the third side of a quadrilateral to arrive back on the A19 at Rawcliffe Bar Park and Ride.

A short bus journey into York took us to the Museum Gardens and Jenny, having visited York several times with Rachel, had no problem in finding The Shambles and the shop, W Hamond, at which we had reserved the Chamelia charm for Rachel. The lady in the shop had exactly what we wanted and thought we had paid for it in Whitby. I explained we hadn't. It's a good job I'm honest. I'd never make a politician.

Jenny took the opportunity to purchase herself a new pair of sheepskin moccasins before returning by bus to our car and heading down the ring road to the A64, A1, M1, M62 and M66 to Bury and home. Unfortunately, we hit the Leeds area at a very busy time and that section of the motorway was very slow going, not helped by bad driving by a number of road users.

Back home for 6:30, having called at Tesco in Bury for a few groceries to tide us over, I unpacked the car and tackled a beer while Jenny prepared tea.

On Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April we went to Manchester with Rachel to inspect her new flat. We had intended to call at Matthew's house to pick up a printer-scanner I was going to borrow but we forgot the keys. The flat was very nice and ready for occupation.

On returning, I caught up with more computer administration work, having done the accounts the previous evening.

In the next month's update, Rachel moved into her new apartment. How did she cope? How did we cope? How does anybody cope? Did the village party succeed like a budgie (think about it). Did our antipodean visitors arrive and were we ready for them? Were they ready for us? All these questions and more besides are answered, but not necessarily correctly.