

Greenmount April 2019

Monday, 1st April 2019

It was a nice day with lovely sunny periods but quite cool for the time of year. I spent most of it working on the back patio, tidying up the now disused pots and the old bin in which there was some quite old, composted and smelly fruit and vegetable matter and cleaning the block paving.

Jenny spent some time preparing for the car boot season and I helped to lift the odd box now and again.

Tuesday, 2nd April 2019

I started my day in the garage loft, as one does. I was looking for a large, cardboard box for Jenny's car booty, currently stored in our bedroom in a large plastic box. The plan was to transfer the contents of the latter into the former so Jenny could use the plastic box for summer clothing, currently sitting in the spare room in a plastic bag. Isn't life complicated?

I left Jenny dealing with that and going clean round the bend (she was also sprucing up the bathroom and toilet) while I carried on with the block paving at the back. Dodging the showers, I almost managed to finish the main part of the patio, bordered by the kitchen door, the conservatory door and the raised beds.

During the showers, I carried on reconstructing my audio media documentation and grabbed a bit of lunch – well, an apple and a cup of tea, anyway. I also finished the Radio Times crossword. What a productive day it had been.

Wednesday, 3rd April 2019

Jill, our next door neighbour, telephoned just after breakfast to let me know she had arranged for a tall tree to be cut down and asked me if I wanted the logs for the fire, which was very nice of her. I thanked her and said yes please.

Jenny said she wasn't feeling well and hadn't been herself since she had banged her head at the restaurant in Wentworth a few weeks previous. She made an appointment at the opticians to have her eyes checked, since she was due anyway and an appointment with the doctor for later in the afternoon.

I went out to continue the work on the block paving, which was looking quite good. I managed to finish the main part of the patio and the first section round the bay of the conservatory before it started to drizzle. I had interrupted that work to take the cut logs from next door over the fence and stack them on the lawn and since it was getting quite damp I moved the logs to shelter under the car port at the front using the wheelbarrow before putting away my tools and coming in to work on the computer instead, leaving Jenny in the garage sorting her car booty.

When Jenny came in, we had lunch and we took some shredded paper for bedding up to the animal sanctuary before returning to Ramsbottom for Jenny's appointment at the opticians. We had time to nip into a couple of charity shops before Jenny had to go for her eye test and I finished off the grand tour, purchasing a couple of DVDs at the last port of call. I did see a DVD in the first shop and I nearly bought it because it wasn't on my list, but Jenny convinced me I did already have it.

I collected Jenny after her test and we made our way to the surgery, where I dropped Jenny and came home.

I set about examining my DVD list and discovered I did not have the DVD I nearly bought but I did have one of the two DVDs I did buy. I updated my list, firstly to ensure that the DVDs were all listed by name (some were currently listed in their collective sets, which made individual DVD titles difficult to find in my alphabetical list) and secondly to add the one new one I had purchased.

I updated my web site with the diary update for March and updated the account of today's exciting excursion.

After tea, I walked down to the cricket club to attend the village committee meeting, returning home about 9:15 p.m. I continued with the reconstruction of my list of audio media until retiring about 11 p.m.

Thursday, 4th April 2019

After the usual morning chores, I gave Jenny a hand to change our bed sheets before going outside to continue cleaning up the block paving.

It was a very cold, windy day. I worked my way round the bay of the conservatory. As I came to the long straight run along the side of the house, there was a small section of the paving that had sunk a little, dipping towards the boundary fence. I had thought about levelling this on several occasions and I decided I might as well tackle it.

I removed the blocks that had dipped quite easily and re-laid them using some old, dry cement I had left over from some previous job to bring the blocks up to the level required. While I was in the process of relaying the blocks, it started to rain a little. I managed to relay all the blocks, fill the gaps between them with kiln-dried sand and tidy up before the rain turned heavy, by which time I was safely back indoors.

I intended recommencing my audio media documentation but I decided to update this diary entry first. That was interrupted, firstly by an E-mail from Amazon informing me that a DVD set of The Quatermass Experiment and Quatermass II which I ordered over a year ago was no longer available and secondly by a couple of unsolicited telephone calls.

One I traced to Niagra Health Care and I found their online contact form. I told them my number was registered with the Telephone Preference Service, asked them to remove it from their list and asked them not to contact me again.

The second was from a number that had called me twice today, twice yesterday and once

on 29th March. I had ignored it each time and no-one had left a message.

I did manage to progress my audio media documentation a little around tea-time.

Friday, 5th April 2019

It was a busy day, the start of what promised to be a fine (weather wise), fun-packed week-end.

We started our grocery shopping outing with a brief visit to Greenmount Medical Centre to collect a prescription for Carrie before heading off to Home Bargains in Bury where we buy our Highland Spring bottled water and pick up any other interesting items we needed. I took the opportunity to nip into Halfords in the same shopping precinct for two bottles of Glym screen-wash for the car, since it was complaining it was running low and I didn't have any in the garage.

It was a short hop across Bury to Cocklestorm. Last August, our neighbour, John, had purchased some replacement fence panels for the boundary fence between our properties. I helped him install the panels at the time and they were four panels plus a small panel short of completing the whole fence. I offered to go half on the cost but he and his wife Jill suggested I replace the remaining panels instead. Hence the visit to Cocklestorm, from which John had purchased the original panels, to order the four panels plus one made to size (94 cm) for the end panel. At £50 each, I left minus an arm and a leg.

Another short haul took us to Matthew and Carrie's House where we dropped off the prescription.

From there, it was a short drive to Asda at Pilsworth where we purchased a few more groceries.

Finally we drove down the M60 to Unicorn in Chorlton for the first major shop of the day. The motorway was busy, with some speed restrictions but at least the traffic kept moving, mostly at a reasonable speed. Some drivers still had not come to terms with the variable speed limit and, more importantly, that average speed was measured between gantries so I would expect the drivers of the half-a-dozen vehicles that passed me would be receiving speeding fines.

From Unicorn we travelled the A56 out to Waitrose at Broadheath, near Altrincham where we lunched before undertaking our second major grocery shop. To say gluten-free lunching at Waitrose still wasn't good would be a gross understatement.

The drive back along the A56 to the M60 was not bad for the most part. The M60, on the other hand, was, as usual, extremely busy. I did manage to keep moving – just and there were brief interludes where my speed actually got into double figures. On passing the M62 junction, it was as though some miracle had been performed. Everything suddenly speeded up and I was able to motor most of the way to our exit at Junction 17 at close to maximum permitted speed (70 mph).

The A56 to Bury was, again very busy and our usual route from Bury to Greenmount up

Brandlesholme Road was blocked with stationary traffic at the main junction at Crosstones, so I took the scenic route up through Tottington and was stuck behind a bus for a good part of the way, there being little opportunity to pass it on the narrower road of the two.

The forty-five-minute journey home took about an hour and a quarter.

Jenny packed away the shopping and prepared tea as usual while I took the opportunity to update the accounts.

After tea, we headed off to the church where some local musicians, mostly amateurs, gave their time to provide an evening of entertainment, with quite a bit of audience participation, all proceeds from the modest entrance fee and the raffle being donated to our local dementia café, D-CaFF. We had a most enjoyable evening, complete with a complementary glass of wine during the interval.

Back home, I managed to squeeze in some more documentation of my audio collection and update this diary before retiring at midnight.

I had not had the time to put in the TV recordings for the coming week – a job for early the following day.

Saturday, 6th April 2019

I started putting in the TV recordings for the coming week until I had to leave off to join Jenny at Greenmount Old School for the monthly villager's Drop-In. I stayed on after Jenny left, until about 3 p.m., working on the electrical jumble and, since I had forgotten the Old School keys, Jenny came back to lock up for me.

I was home in time to listen to Jazz Record Requests, which was marginally better than the rubbish played the previous week, with one decent tune, a Fats Waller composition called London Blues, played by Humphrey Lyttelton and his band.

I finished off the TV recordings for the week and prepared the car for Jenny and Rachel to pack it for the following day's car boot sale.

Sunday, 7th April 2019

We were up at 5 a.m. and I was first downstairs for a change, putting out breakfast. After eating, I went out to pump up the car tyres to maximum pressure for the full load and put the car on the road, ready for Jenny.

After the girls had gone, I put on one of my Jazz CDs while I washed the pots from breakfast and the previous evening.

I did a little administration work before going outside to continue cleaning the block paving and spent all day up to about 5 p.m. finishing off the side passage and completing the path at the front. I did have a couple of breaks, a short one about 10:30 for an apple and a glass of water and about an hour and a half for lunch and tidying up afterwards,

giving me the opportunity to listen to a second of my Jazz CDs.

I also took time out to cook a duck for tea and to empty the rubbish into the various bins.

Jenny and Rachel arrived home just before I finished working outside. I learned later they had done reasonably well, after a slow start. The weather improved as the day wore on and when the sun came out it turned rather warm.

I packed up and came in for a cup of tea and then had a shower to ease my aches and pains before relaxing and having tea.

Monday, 8th April 2019

I continued cleaning the block paving and it was a day spent working on the drive. That included taking up the surface drain covers and cleaning out the channels. I had to leave the last section by the side wall because it was covered by a pile of logs from the tree that was cut down next door.

By the end of the day, working from the garage door, I had tidied the flat section and about a quarter of the way up the sloping section, comprising about half of the whole drive. The sloping part was the hardest part. The right-hand side of it was well populated with plants that had seeded themselves from the garden and attempts to pull them out failed, so I had no alternative but to spray them with weed killer, which I did not like using. I was careful not to spray the London Pride that was overhanging the stone wall.

Tuesday, 9th April 2019

For a bit of a change, I cut the grass on the back lawn for the second time this season. That was followed by trimming the edges using a combination of shears and the strimmer.

I also took off the picnic bench cover to give it an airing since no rain was forecast for the next couple of days.

I moved on to the front lawn, cutting the grass, trimming the edges and cleaning the moss off the edging at the bottom.

The work on the front garden was interrupted by the need to fix the lawn mower.

The old Flymo lawn mower was still cutting the grass well but its bodywork was falling apart. We had a lot in common.

On this occasion the handle, which was in two parts and designed to fold for storage, had faulty fixings. One side had a bolt on which the thread had worn and, fortunately, I had a spare one. The other side would not undo and the bolt, which was supposed to be held in place in the outer part of the handle, just kept turning round. The only way to remove it was with a hacksaw, which destroyed both the bolt and the wing nut. Fortunately, I had a spare nut and I found a bolt with a posi-drive head of the right size

with the correct thread, albeit a bit on the long side. So, for the present, the lawnmower had a new lease of life.

My day was interspersed periodically by Jenny's need for assistance with sorting and storing her car booty following Sunday's sale.

Wednesday, 10th April 2019

We walked down to Bury in bright sunshine, the warmth of the sun being tempered by the bitterly cold, easterly breeze.

Arriving in Bury, we nipped into Costa Coffee at Tesco, hoping they would have a gluten-free snack for lunch. They didn't.

I wanted a clamp with jaws of approximately 50 cm to repair Jenny's laundry basket and I walked up to Wickes to buy one. The largest they had was 46 cm, that being the overall length, so the jaw size was somewhat smaller.

Meanwhile, Jenny went for a potter round Boots and then walked across to B&M in the Millgate precinct in an unsuccessful search of doilies, which is where I caught up with her.

Jenny purchased a couple of cards from the card shop (where else?) and we tried Poundland for the doilies, again unsuccessfully, on our way to catch the 480 bus back to Greenmount.

Apart from the pleasant walk, it had been rather a waste of a good part of the day.

We had a mid-afternoon snack at home, after which there seemed little point in changing to go and work outside for an hour or so before packing up for the day.

Thursday, 11th April 2019

We went grocery shopping, calling briefly at the tip in Bury, followed by Unicorn in Chorlton, Sainsbury's in Sale and Waitrose at Broadheath, near Altrincham. Not only was the outward bound journey reasonable, with some speed restrictions on the M60, but Waitrose actually had a gluten-free, chicken sandwich for my lunch. Unfortunately, that's where my good fortune for the day ran out with a slow crawl home along the M60 yet again.

Friday, 12th April 2019

It was D-CaFF day so I spent the morning continuing the recovery of my audio media documentation and the afternoon at the dementia café where we were all entertained by the Greenmount Strummers.

Following that, we had a most enjoyable evening at the Duckworth Arms, dining with Carrie and her family (her parents, Bob and Marie, her two brothers and their families,

Martin, Catherine, Benjamin and Katie and Stuart, Susanne and Joseph) and, of course, Matthew.

Saturday, 13th April 2019

We were up early and spent the whole day working on the electrical jumble at the old school. When we came home about 4:30 p.m., Jenny and Rachel packed the car for the following day's car boot sale while I listened to the last part of Jazz Record Requests and then to a recording of the first half.

Sunday, 14th April 2019

It was a 5 a.m. start with Jenny and Rachel going off to the car boot sale in Ramsbottom. I went to the old school at about 7 a.m. and I was there until about 4:30 p.m. preparing for the jumble sale.

Monday, 15th April 2019

I helped Jenny unload the car and store away the car booty before going round to the old school about 9 a.m. Jenny joined me about lunch time and we had lunch there. We left after the jumble sale and we were home for about 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 16th April 2019

Following the frenzied activity of the last few days, we had a lie-in and didn't breakfast until about 11 a.m.

I had forgotten to collect my Tamsulosin tablets the previous day, so a walk across to the chemist was my first piece of exercise for the day. I took the opportunity to book an appointment at the surgery to see my favourite practitioner, John Hampson and the 7:10 a.m. appointment on the 2nd May suited me fine since my needs were not urgent and it would ensure an early start to my day.

Jenny suggested I might like to start some cleaning and tidying in the lounge while she made some bread. As a result, the continuance of my gardening was put on hold.

I started by cleaning the fire, which we had not used for a good while. The hearth, the fire surround, the mirror and all the ornaments and accessories followed.

Nor did I stop there, moving on and up to the Last of the Summer Wine picture on the wall, the alarm sensor, the door to the dining area and the hi-fi speaker all to the left of the fire place and the TV and hi-fi cabinet to the right. The latter involved some acrobatics in as much as I climbed over the cabinet into the corner to clean behind the cabinet, making the acquaintance of a rather large house spider in the corner that ran off somewhere out of my way.

There was a brief interlude for a snack that gave me the opportunity to catch up on my

E-mails and to update my web site with the latest newsletter from Greenpeace, focussing mainly on pollution.

If you're wondering why I published these it is to give you some idea of what the human race needed to do if it was to survive and how quickly it needed to do it. Contrary to the song lyrics, money doesn't make the world go round; money, or at least the desire to have more of it, is killing the planet. Your assignment, should you choose to accept it, is to do what you can to reverse the destructive power of the world's politicians and large corporate businesses, without, of course, resorting to violence.

Wednesday, 17th April 2019

Our cleaning and tidying frenzy continued, which included a full audit of my DVDs and an update to my DVD documentation.

Thursday, 18th April 2019

We took time out from our cleaning and tidying to deliver the latest issue of The Voice, the village newsletter, round our estate.

On the way back, I called at the old school to root out some power supplies as potential replacements for one on which the cable had been chewed by the dog belonging to Kelly, one of the ladies who comes to our jumble sales

Cleaning resumed after lunch and not only was the lounge nice, clean and tidy but so was the dining room and the conservatory. Jenny tended to the bathroom and toilet.

Friday, 19th April 2019

We went grocery shopping as usual.

First we had to empty the junk from the jumble sale out of the car at the tip in Bury and we made a very early start, so much so that we reached the Trafford Centre a quarter of an hour before the shops opened at 10 a.m.

We had decided to call at John Lewis on our way to Unicorn because I wanted to see if they had the latest Dell XP laptops in stock so I could look at them before buying and Jenny wanted a baking tin and some accessories.

John Lewis did not stock the higher end Dell systems so that was a waste of time. Jenny wasn't sure about the tins so we took a look at those in Lakeland before returning to buy at John Lewis.

We motored on to Unicorn and then to Waitrose at Broadheath, lunching before shopping.

The trip home was more of a breeze than the usual crawl because the children were off school for Easter and we called at Bargain Booze at Tottington for more essential

supplies before coming home.

Saturday, 20th April 2019

I finished putting in the TV recordings for the week and then went round to the old school to meet Kelly to try the replacement power supplies with her appliance. Unfortunately, the pin size on the replacements was too small and I brought home the appliance and original charger to try to repair it.

The repair involved cutting out the chewed bits of wire and then reconnecting the powers supply to the appliance connector using a strip connector. That didn't work because the chewed wire had bare wires that had shorted out the charger and burnt it out.

I decided to pick up one of the replacement chargers from the old school, cut off the connector and substitute the connector from the old charger using the strip connector. I also decided to leave that until Monday morning and arranged to see Kelly later on Monday at the old school.

I turned my attention to briefly continuing the reconstruction of the documentation of my audio media before listening to Jazz Record Requests.

Sunday, 21st April 2019

We spent the morning preparing for the meal with Matthew and Carrie, Carrie's parents, Bob and Marie and Rachel. I helped Jenny with the vegetable preparation.

Our visitors arrived about 2 p.m. and we had a most enjoyable afternoon with good food, good wine and good company.

Monday, 22nd April 2019

We were at the old school at 8:30 a.m. to help with the Antiques and Collectors Fair. Jenny spotted a clock for sale, which we bought for the dining area, although it did need some attention first.

Jenny helped out with the bric-a-brac and purchased a few items for herself.

I helped Frank and Gwen with the DVDs, CDs and records and ended up buying quite a few DVDs. Jenny also bought a double record album of Cliff Richard songs.

Kelly came to pick up her charger and appliance, which I had fixed and brought some jumble with her.

We came home when the sale ended at 4 p.m., leaving everything in place for the Collectors Fair the following Saturday.

I catalogued the DVDs I had purchased.

Tuesday, 23rd April 2019

I spent most of the day pottering round the garden and cutting the grass.

Wednesday, 24th April 2019

After a good few early starts, we had a bit of a lie-in and it was 11 a.m. before I made it into the garden. I fed the back and front lawns and intended tidying up the side but it started to rain earlier than expected. Jenny had walked up to the library in Tooting and returned for lunch just before the rain started.

I updated the accounts and dealt with my E-mails before looking again at the Dell XPS 15. I put together a bundle comprising the top of the range XPS 15 and the TB16 dock. Unfortunately, the laptop did not come with Windows 10 Professional.

A chat with a Dell sales support person reduced the price somewhat and arranged a Windows Professional licence. I had 24 hours to consider the quotation I received by E-mail.

I had also sent an E-mail to a company Matthew suggested might be able to help with a stainless steel radiator replacement for the bathroom but they couldn't.

Later in the day Jenny suggested I spent too much time on the computer. I was not best pleased.

While I went round to the old school to cool off, the chap up the road came down and told Jenny I could have the wood from the tree he had removed so Jenny and I went up and carried the two large pieces down and dumped them under the car port.

Thursday, 25th April 2019

I spent the day cutting wood in preparation for next winter. Jenny was a big help, packing the wood away in boxes in the trailer, in the garage, where they would dry out before I needed to use them. That meant I could concentrate on cutting and chopping the wood without leaving off and, by the end of the day, we had tidied up the car port somewhat and cut all the wood apart from a couple of very large, old pieces and the two new pieces we had collected the previous day.

Since Jenny did not approve of my computer activities, I declined the quotation from Dell and reluctantly decided to struggle on with what I had, which was barely adequate for my needs.

Friday, 26th April 2019

We went grocery shopping. We bought our Highland Spring water and a few other items from Home Bargains in Bury before making our way to Unicorn. Apart from one idiot who tried to pass me in the nearside lane while I was travelling at the speed limit in the middle lane and, a short time later, an impatient driver behind me in the outside lane who

expected me to travel faster than the speed limit indicated on the gantry, the journey was uneventful.

We pressed on to Sainsbury's in Sale on our way to Waitrose in Broadheath. There a surprise awaited us. After searching the sandwich shelves for a gluten-free lunch (all the food packaging had changed), we came across a prawn cocktail sandwich. Not only was it gluten-free but it was MSC certified! Even better, it was at an introductory offer price.

The bread was not up to our usual standard, but, then, gluten-free bread in restaurants usually wasn't (they hadn't tried buying from the Hand-Made Bakery) but it was a giant leap in the right direction.

I collected the new Philips steam generator iron from Customer Services. I had ordered it earlier in the week from John Lewis to replace our old Bosch steam iron, which I intended trying to repair at some stage.

The journey home was not the worst we had experienced but it was slow going and there was some appalling driving from impatient drivers.

Saturday, 27th April 2019

We went round to the Old School to help out at the Collectors Fair, which was nowhere near as busy as the Antique and Collectors Fair the previous Monday. Jenny came home early to pack the car for the following day's car boot sale with Rachel's help.

I stayed on until about 2:30, having packed up early and came home in good time to listen to Jazz Record Requests at 4 p.m., spending the intervening time to progress my audio collection documentation.

Sunday, 28th April 2019

Another early start had me checking the weather forecast at 5:15 a.m. and it looked pretty good, if not very warm, so we had breakfast and I checked the car tyres and put it on the road for Jenny.

The girls sped off about 6:45 a.m. and I settled down to put in the TV programmes for the rest of the coming week, having already made a start on Friday evening.

I followed that up by more computer work without getting my ear bent.

I finished off the administrative session by replacing Internet Explorer with Google Chrome on Rachel's laptop and on the old Dell XPS M170, now running Windows 7.

I finally started work on the landing skirting, left over from when we decorated the landing, staircase and dining room over a year ago. The first job was to remove the old skirting and that seemed to be more straightforward than I expected. I broke off for some lunch about half way through.

Monday, 29th April 2019

I wasn't sure which job to tackle first. In the end, it was, to a large extent decided for me.

Jenny needed my help to unpack the car and to store the boxes away in the garage as she sorted them, ready for next week. Since that did not fully occupy my time, I tidied up the ivy along the garage wall as well.

To add to the excitement, the fencing I had ordered from Cockelstorm arrived and I arranged with Matthew to install it the following evening.

After a lunch break, I tidied up the side border and helped Jenny put away the rest of her car booty.

Tuesday, 30th April 2019

We drove into Ramsbottom and toured the charity shops where I found a Benny Goodman CD and a couple of DVDs of interest.

We had a lunch date with Bob and Marie and bumped into them as we left one of the charity shops. They joined us as they were also looking in the charity shops before lunch.

We dined at Owens and had a very nice lunch. Afterwards we joined Bob and Marie at their home for the rest of the afternoon, returning home for about 5 p.m., half an hour before Matthew was due to help me replace the panels in the boundary fence between our property and that next door.

We removed and replaced the first panel reasonably easily. The second one was far more difficult and despite some fairly hefty persuasion, the panel stuck at about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down. We removed it again with more brute force and laid it on the garden bench, suitably covered with a protective cloth and plastic sheeting, with the intention of cutting a thin slice off one side to make it shorter, length-wise. Before doing so, we measured the gap between the posts and then the panel, confirming that we needed to remove half an inch.

I marked the position of the cut and set the guide on my circular saw. Despite cutting through several nails, the cut went according to plan even if sparks did fly.

The adjusted panel fitted perfectly. Unfortunately, it had taken so long we had to break off and leave the remaining two until Sunday. Meanwhile, we reinserted the two old panels we had removed earlier so that there were no gaps in the fence.