

## **Greenmount August 2022**

### **Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022**

It was a nice day and, following a couple of dry days, I decided to resume the fence painting. Rain was due later so I had while about 3 p.m., which would give enough time for the paint to become waterproof before the bad weather set in. That would also give me time to fetch Matthew's parcel from Holcombe Brook Post Office.

I painted the garden-side of the remaining panel in the fence bordering the common land and broke off for lunch, having made a late start following a few routine jobs.

After lunch I just had time to paint the first panel in the back fence before leaving off to tidy up and walk up to the post office with Jenny.

I dealt with a few e-mails and tidied up some of the recorded TV programmes we had watched before I went out to fetch in the washing lines as it started to spit with rain.

### **Tuesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2022**

I didn't feel so good so I didn't do much. Most of my day was spent sorting out the Nectar application on Jenny's iPhone. I couldn't remember whether Jenny's card had been registered against her e-mail address or mine. In the end, with the help of Nectar support, I discovered that it had been registered against Jenny's e-mail address and all the confirmation e-mails sent to Jenny's e-mail address had gone into the Spam folder at Zen. No wonder it didn't work. I never thought to look in the Spam folder.

I marked all the messages as not Spam and I put the sender's e-mail address on the white list, so, hopefully, all future e-mails would be picked up by her iPhone.

I sorted it all out and eventually had the application up and running by the end of the afternoon.

On a good day that would have taken me less than an hour.

Feeling as I did and plodding along with this, I missed the PACT meeting at the old school. I had attended the one the drop-in last week so I didn't think I missed much.

### **Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2022**

It was a nice enough day with the forecast showing a 10% chance of rain during the morning. I decided to risk painting the fence and, fortunately, the rain held off. It was slow going, though and I only managed to complete two panels along the back fence. It did make a bit of a mess of the back border, something I would have to tidy later.

## **Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

I had intended to paint the remaining three panels in the back fence. That didn't happen.

First and foremost, there was some rain about in the morning and there was a short shower. There was no point in painting wet fence panels.

On top of that I didn't feel well. I had terrible pain in my abdomen and lower back and what was more worrying, I had difficulty in urinating. I had obviously upset my lower internal organs, lugging the Black and Decker Workmate into position so I could stand on it to reach the top of the fence panels yesterday and climbing up and down.

I sat in the lounge and dealt with a few administrative items on my computer.

By mid-afternoon I was starting to feel a little better and I thought I might go and cut the grass on the front garden. It had grown quite high and I had deliberately left it to do so, allowing the grass to go to seed, in the hope that it might throttle the moss. Unfortunately, it went rather overcast and cool again and, when I stood up, my aches and pains came back.

I decided to potter round to the village store for next week's Radio Times and the short walk seemed to do me good. On returning, I put out the non-recyclable rubbish bin for collection in the morning.

I started thumbing through the TV listings for items of interest during next week.

## **Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Grocery shopping was the order of the day. We went to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park and Tesco at Prestwich, calling at Matthew and Carries House on the way back to drop off a parcel for them.

## **Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

I had planned to go round to the old school to work on the electrical jumble but I was not up early enough.

The back-up plan was to have a look at the dripping, kitchen, hot tap but Jenny was in the kitchen cooking and baking all day.

I resorted to cutting the grass on the front, which was very long, having been left for several weeks to go to seed. That took ages and, being long, it had retained a lot of moisture. I finished that, trimmed the edges and swept up before tackling the back garden.

Having completed that, I swept the side passage and the patio, cleaned the lawn mower and strimmer and tidied up.

I finished off by removing the netting from the small strawberry bed and removing all the dead bits, cutting off the stalks that had bore the fruit and the runners, since I had no more room for new plants.

### **Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

I started the day with a run to the rubbish dump in Bury, taking the electrical items from the old school and the waste water from washing my paint brushes in sealed containers. I was running out of tubs.

I had a look at the tap in the kitchen and could not find any way of looking inside the valve mechanism. My assumption was that it was a sealed unit. I cleaned it up and put it back together. It seemed to be a little better but we still needed a new sink unit and a new tap.

After lunch, I painted two more fence panels at the back and Rachel painted one on the side that bordered our neighbour.

We finished at about 7 p.m.

### **Monday, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

I painted the last fence panel at the back of the garden and, after lunch, tackled the first one on the boundary with our neighbours. The time to paint one panel was approximately 2½ hours and if I were to finish all the panels by the weekend, after which we were back to rain, I would have to complete three a day.

### **Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Another two fence panels were completed and I touched up a few spots on the one Rachel painted on Sunday. I hadn't realised how difficult that was, with one of the rough-cut side pieces very rough indeed, as though it had been cut from the very outside of the tree. No wonder it took her so long. My time for completing one panel was around 2½ hours.

### **Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

With the heat wave forecast to continue for the rest of the week and the weekend, I was making the most of the fine weather and tackled more of the fencing leaving five panels and the gate still to do.

In the evening, I started looking through next week's Radio Times for programmes to record.

### **Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

We were grocery shopping a day early this week. Tomorrow, our usual day for foraging, was D-CaFF day and Jenny was all set to put in her first appearance since she was taken ill and since the resumption of the sessions after the Covid pandemic.

We visited Unicorn and Waitrose this week, using the Waitrose application on Jenny's mobile phone for the first time to redeem two vouchers.

I continued looking through next week's Radio Times for programmes to record.

### **Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

I had an e-mail from BT urging me to connect our new digital phone, which I did. I also installed the BT application on our mobile phones that, as I understood it, allowed us to make and receive calls on the mobile phones using our home number wherever we were. How successful this was would remain to be seen.

We concentrated on preparation for D-CFF, which we attended in the afternoon, the theme being Summer Holiday with a showing of excerpts from the Cliff Richard film of that name.

After that, I finished off the TV recordings for the coming week.

### **Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

I completed another two fence panels and painted the awkward bits in a third, leaving that to finish, another panel and the last half-panel to paint tomorrow.

### **Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

I completed the fence and packed up at about 5 p.m., listening to a couple of Jazz CDs in the afternoon while painting followed by a relaxing hour or so on the patio bench listening to a Lonnie Donegan CD, having fed our friendly robin with dried mealworms.

### **Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Our heat wave was due to come to an end today and rain was forecast with a warning of thunderstorms. In the event, we saw only an unscheduled shower in the morning.

We walked up to Holcombe Brook post office with the redundant BT broadband kit to return it to BT using the pre-paid postage packaging BT had sent me. We took our raincoats just in case it turned wet but we didn't need them; the closest we came to rain were a few random spots.

After lunch, I packaged up the old BT cordless telephone equipment for our net car boot sale. It has been rendered redundant by our new digital phone line and internet-type phone and the phone application on each of our iPhones.

I tidied up the TV programmes we had watched recently and dealt with a bit more administrative work on the laptop.

### **Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

We delivered the latest issue of the village leaflet, The Greenmount Voice to the households in our local area.

I spent most of the rest of the day getting to grips with the new digital telephone and the BT Cloud system. With the help of BT support, I finally managed to synchronise the contacts on the digital telephone with those on our mobiles.

It remained to discover how to delete the call history log.

### **Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Jenny announced that we were short of Highland Spring Water. Since she had an appointment at the Podiatry Clinic in Bury, I drove down to Tesco in Bury with the intention of buying two six-packs of 1.5 litre bottles. The store did not have any.

We purchased a few other groceries. Jenny decided to walk to the clinic for her appointment and I came home and dealt with the dirty dishes from last evening.

Jenny came home by bus and we had lunch, after which we drove into Ramsbottom, still in search of Highland Spring water. We found three six packs that had been held together with sticky-tape and reduced in price. We purchased those and took them to the car before touring the charity shops where I found yet another Louis Armstrong CD in one of them.

Our last visit was to Plentiful, primarily for some organic caster sugar, purchasing a couple of other items as well. We also saw that Plentiful stocked the organic golden syrup I had previously ordered online, which was on Jenny's list for me to order.

Returning home, I brought the accounts up to date.

### **Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

### **Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

We had a very pleasant day out in York, pottering round the shops. I had insisted we set off early because I expected the traffic to be horrendous on the M62 motorway, particularly around the Leeds area, due to the rail strike. As it turned out, the journey only took an hour and a half and we were at the Askham Bar Park and Ride by 9:30 a.m.

We had lunch at Bailey's Tea Rooms and an early evening meal at Pizz Express because we were joining a cemetery walk at 7 p.m. and we needed to be there about 15 minutes before that. I had allowed a good hour for returning to the Park and Ride, collecting the car and driving to the cemetery. In fact we only just made it. There was a lot of traffic on the route back into York because there had been a race meeting and our journey had coincided with all the vehicles leaving the race course at the end of the day. Added to that, we missed a turning that led to the cemetery and ended up too far south on the A19, having to back-track about half a mile.

The walk was around several graves at various locations in the cemetery where the lady guide gave us an insight into the life and demise of one of the grave occupants. Having done some of my own family research, I found the detail of the investigation into each of the cases most interesting.

We completed the journey home in about an hour and a half as well, traffic being light at that time of the evening and the only obstacle being the M62 reduced to one lane around Leeds with the arrangements for merging traffic into the nearside lane from three lanes was very badly managed and even more poorly executed by drivers (a) not waiting until the obstacle to merge, (b) vehicles in the left lane not leaving enough of a gap to allow zip merging (i.e. merging alternately) at speed and (c) drivers not having a clue how to merge at speed, all of which came as no surprise. It seemed that IQs of most drivers dropped by about 50% when they were behind a wheel. Having made that point, we did not merge into the nearside lane until very close to the point where the outer two lanes were closed and a lorry driver did leave a gap for us, which was very kind of him/her.

### **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

After the long day yesterday, we did not rise particularly early. Jenny and I went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's store at Heaton park and Tesco at Prestwich, which took most of the rest of our day.

I read the meters and submitted the figures to our energy and water suppliers in readiness for the next monthly bill.

### **Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2022**

I started my day with some administrative work, dealing with e-mails and the accounts, having received the bills from the utility companies.

The kitchen sink hot tap had reached the stage where it was impossible to stop it dripping and I had another look at it. It needed a new valve. The problem was ensuring that I purchased the correct type of fitting and not being that knowledgeable about this aspect of plumbing, I decided to ask our plumber tomorrow to briefly come out of retirement. Meanwhile, I left the hot water supply to the sink turned off, which was not particularly convenient.

I went outside and planted the pot of parsley Jenny had bought yesterday in her bed. I then tidied up the strawberry beds.

It was after finishing off that I we caught sight of movement in the garden and I thought at first it was a grey squirrel, which we did see from time to time. It was, in fact a rat.

The rat was coming for food Jenny had put out for the birds, entering our garden using a hole under the concrete base in the back fence from our neighbour's garden.

We immediately removed all the food that was out and I boarded up not one, but four, holes under the fence, although I did not expect that to deter the rat for long.

We informed our neighbours next door and across the back and I sent an e-mail to Bury Environmental Health. I had not decided on how to deal with the rat(s). The first step would be to see if any more runs under the fence appeared.

I came in and undertook some more PC administrative work before tea.

### **Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022**

I telephoned our plumber and discussed the kitchen sink tap problem. He suggested I buy a new tap and recommended the Bristan range and that I try the local City Plumbing supplier. Once I had the new tap, he would fit it for me before he went on holiday on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September.

Jenny and I settled on the Bristan Manhattan tap with a chrome finish. City Plumbing no longer stocked it and, after shopping around, I found one that was very reasonably priced on Amazon and asked Matthew to order it for me using his Prime account, which meant it should arrive tomorrow.

I whizzed off to my dental appointment where the dentist examined my teeth, fixed the broken one on the lower left and cleaned them. I was then good for another six months. Unfortunately, having the newly repaired tooth, I had to forego lunch.

I took Jenny and Rachel to Dunelm and Hobbycraft in Bolton. I sat in the car, listening to a Trad Jazz CD while the ladies shopped. The afternoon turned very wet, with heavy rain.

### **Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2022**

I didn't feel too well when I awoke and I booked a slot on AskMyGP, although I wasn't holding my breath.

I spent the morning and the early afternoon working on the recent photos I had taken for D-CaFF and in York.

After lunch we went for a walk down to Bottom's Hall cottages in Two Brooks Valley to see if there was any sign of manure being dumped by the side of the lane leading down to the cottages and to check the status of the public footpath past the front of the cottages, leading along the valley.

There was no sign of any manure being dumped. The footpath. Footpath 19, was still closed due to a culvert collapse. I had first reported this to one of the councillors for

Tottington about 18 months ago and there was still no sign of any progress. That left me wondering just exactly why some of our senior council employees were paid such ridiculously high salaries for sitting on their backsides and doing nothing for the public they served, or, in this case, didn't serve.

I produced a report and circulated it to all the Civic Society committee members in readiness for our monthly meeting on Thursday evening.

### **Wednesday, 24 August 2022**

It was mostly a day of little jobs. I tidied up a few things, emptied the dehumidifier which had stopped with a full tank the previous evening, emptied the shredder which had filled its bin the previous evening and took the rubbish to the recycling bins, during which I received a telephone call from the doctor's receptionist at Tottington asking if I could attend the surgery on Friday and I said I couldn't because I was busy, so the receptionist said she would have to ring me back.

I went out and checked the tyre pressures on Rachel's car, which she had asked me to do the previous day and checked our car while I had the air pump out.

I found another empty tub for the waste water from washing the brushes I used to paint the fence into which I poured the water from the bucket that I had left full of liquid because I thought I had nowhere else to put it. I cleaned out the bucket and stored it away in the garage. The waste water had to be disposed of in a safe manner and it was destined for the waste recycling depot in Bury.

It was late in the day when I decided to look at the gate. I intended to remove the post that had broken loose from the brick pillar and reattach it. That was easier said than done.

Initially, I could not remove the screws holding the batten to which the gate closed to the post. With the aid of some WD40 and a bit of perseverance, I managed to remove the middle and bottom screws by hand, having made a mess of the top screw head, trying to remove it using my electric drill in screwdriver mode. The batten was now free to swing and it occurred to me that if I swung it round in an anticlockwise direction, I could unscrew it from the post. That removed the batten and I then removed the screw from the top of it from the back using a pair of mole-grips.

I now had access to the two coach screws securing the post to the brick pillar. The head of these screws was a good 20 mm inside the post and it took me a short while to discover their removal required a star-drive.

The bottom screw had sheared where it went into the pillar and I was able to remove the front part from the post by hand using WD40 and a star drive. The top screw would not budge and I left that, deciding to concentrate on removing what was left of the bottom screw from the brick pillar. After some time, it was obvious my drill bits were no match for the screw, progress being unbelievably slow.

I packed up for the day and came in to find out what type of drill bits I needed.

Apparently, the best drill bits to use were carbide bits but these were not suitable for hand drills. The next best type of bit was made with between 5% and 8% of cobalt. I looked for some and found a set of such bits on Amazon. I asked Matthew to order them for me using his Prime account so I would have them tomorrow.

It had been an interesting and varied day.

### **Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

We went round to the old school to deal with the electrical jumble in readiness for the table-top sale on Saturday. We returned home for a late lunch and since time was moving on, I decided not to start work on the gate using the new drill bits that had arrived while we were out. Instead, I looked through the TV programme listings for the first few days of next week for programmes to schedule for recording.

I had an early tea before attending the Civic Society Committee meeting in the evening. That lasted a couple of hours and I finished off the programme schedules when I came home.

### **Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

The plan was to reach the Trafford Centre on the way to Unicorn in Chorlton by 10 a.m., calling at Matthew and Carrie's home to drop off the potted plants for which we had been caring while Matthew and Carrie had been on holiday.

We left much later than expected, dropped off the plants at Matthew and Carrie's house, encountering roadworks on Bury ring road, the A458 and the A56, the main road to Manchester yet again. From there we headed to Prestwich to join the M66, the Manchester outer ring road. I changed my mind as we approached it since all three lanes west-bound were more or less stationary. Instead, I headed towards the city centre and joined the inner ring-road west-bound. That was plagued by roadworks as well.

We finally made it to our exit to the road down to Chorlton and arrived at Unicorn at about 11 a.m.

From there we drove to Waitrose in Broadheath to finish out grocery shopping and we came home via the M66 and very soon discovered very slow-moving traffic in all three lanes with a speed restriction of 40 m.p.h. We were lucky enough to manage 20 m.p.h. for some of the way.

Traffic was heavy all the way up to Bury, after leaving the motorway and I decided to take the road home through Tottington rather than fight my way through the queuing traffic at the bottom of Brandlesholme road, our more direct route home.

We were home for about 3 p.m., giving me ample time to prepare myself for my doctor's appointment at 4 p.m. at Greenmount Surgery. Following my recent spate of UTIs and treatment with three lots of antibiotics, the doctor had requested a blood test. That showed some anomalies and my GP wanted to discuss them and examine me. That resulted in a prescription for some Statins, something I had thus far avoided and a referral to a Urologist

within four weeks. The good news at this point was that whatever it was did not seem to be serious and the referral was as much precautionary as it was remedial.

So ended a busy day.

### **Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

I put in the Tv recordings for this coming week.

We were at the table-top sale at the old school for 9 a.m. and home for lunch at about 1 p.m.

After lunch, I dealt with some e-mails and then went out to have another crack at removing the metal bolt from the brick pillar to which the gate post was hanging by the top bolt only. I used some new 8% cobalt metal drill bits Matthew had ordered for me from Amazon but they didn't make much of an impression. I gave up and came in for tea.

### **Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

We went to see Jenny's brother, Wilf and his wife Annes in Sheffield, not having seen them since before the Covid pandemic, about three years ago. Their son, Adam was there too and his partner, Marie, arrived just as we were leaving.

It was very nice to see them again and we had a most pleasant day.

The same could not be said for the evening, with a very disappointing meal at meadow Farm in Ecclesfield as we made our way home. Jenny's first choice of a salmon fillet was not available and her second choice, a Chicken Tikka and my lamb Rogan Josh were both served with only one popedom each when the menu stated two. When this was pointed out, we were offered a second scoop of vegan ice cream with our Bakewell tart suites. These appeared to be served with only one scoop of ice cream and the sponge and base both tasted undercooked. Jenny's Bakewell Tart was far superior. We resolved not to go there ever again.

We would have tried to obtain a table at le Bistro in Wentworth but, sadly, the restaurant had closed down. It was a great pity because it not only served excellent food but the meals were fairly priced and the service was extremely good. It was very rare to find the level of attention to detail practised there.

### **Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Our plumber, Peter, arrived as expected at 9 a.m. and replaced the leaking tap on the kitchen sink with the new one we had purchased. His workmanship was, as always, excellent.

Peter also had a look at the toilet that was leaking water from the cistern into the pan and managed to dismantle the syphon despite the awkwardness of the access. He examined the

washer at the bottom of the syphon which seemed to be alright but a little hard and suggested we should first replace it to see if that resolved the problem. The difficulty was in identifying the type and size of the washer, there being no maker or reference on the cistern. He said he would telephone me later in the day to let me know if he had located a washer or not. Otherwise it may be necessary to replace the complete cistern.

I discussed the possibility of replacing the porcelain sink with a stainless steel one but the one I had considered had a marginally smaller width and the existing cut-out in the worktop may turn out to be too wide, not being particularly neat. It may need a new worktop. I said it might be better to approach the company that fitted our kitchen.

I tidied up a few things before lunch and I had intended putting some more weed killer on the block paving but the weather looked doubtful, with a 10% chance of rain forecast so I decided to wait, possibly until tomorrow, dry weather being forecast for the next few days.

I continued tidying after lunch. The weather improved and I sprayed all the block paving weeds on the patio and down the side passage with weed killer before taking my end of day shower.

## **Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

I went through my e-mails and found my car insurance renewal quotation so I spent some time checking through that and sending a query to the insurers.

I went out and finished off treating the block paving with weed killer, dealing with the drive and the front path.

I had to leave off to follow Rachel down to Finney's garage. She was taking her car in for its MOT. Rachel and Jenny, who came with me, wanted a lift back into Bury to go round the shops. I came home to finish off the drive and then cut the grass front and back, trimmed the edges, cleaned the mower and strimmer and tidied up, sweeping the block paving before finishing for the day.

Rachel and Jenny walked back down to the garage to collect Rachel's car and arrived home as I was cleaning the mower.

## **Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022**

I washed the dishes and cleaned the kitchen sink before turning my attention to my e-mails. Jenny suggested we nip into Ramsbottom for a few grocery items, which we did after lunch.

We toured the charity shops first and then bought the supplies we needed. While we were in the area, I went up to Peter's house to drop off his torch which he had left at our house on Monday.