

## Greenmount August 2023

### Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023

I felt much better. My cough had subsided somewhat and I resumed work in the back bedroom, tidying up the coving corner by the door and filling in the gouges in the ceiling plaster.

I broke off for lunch and Jenny was looking quite miserable so I suggested we go for a walk after lunch.

The rain had stopped and we walked up through Old Kays Park onto Turton Road and down the track to Two Brooks Valley. The view from the top of the park was across the fields and wooded valley to Holcombe Hill and the Peel Monument on top. By this time, the sun was out and it was a pleasant day, even if it was very wet underfoot. How fortunate we were to live in such a pleasant, green, rural area on the West Pennine Moors.

The footpath along Two Brooks Valley was still fenced off due to a collapsed culvert and it was so overgrown, there was no evidence a path had ever existed. The council had done absolutely nothing to repair it.

We crossed the bridge over the stream and took the path behind the cottages up the field to Hollymount. It was at this point I regretted not wearing my walking boots. We picked our way along the wet, muddy track and over two stiles, the first time Jenny had tackled such obstacles after her leg operation, just over a year ago and she did very well.

We headed down the lane to the golf course and met our neighbour, Lorna, heading in the opposite direction, so we stopped for a chat before returning home down the footpath from the golf course which came out just across the road from our house.

I settled down to tackle the e-mail on my desktop, deleting the configuration from yesterday and starting from scratch. That worked first time. Things were looking up.

On the laptop, I managed to configure Outlook 365 to look more like earlier versions of Outlook, with which I was very pleased.

I looked at my problem of creating a mailing list for the Civic Society and discovered the problem was that, with my IMAP configuration, I had two contact lists, one of which was for this computer only, associated with my e-mail address and the other was a personal one on this computer. It seemed that the mailing list wanted to obtain all its entries from the former and all my contacts were in the latter, from an imported pst file.

It wasn't until I went to bed that my cough returned with a vengeance even though I had taken my second omeprazole tablet in the evening.

## **Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023**

I woke at 3:30 a.m. to a call of nature and immediately started coughing again. A glass of water and a couple of strong mints seemed to help me get off to sleep – eventually, but I did not exactly leap out of bed at 9 a.m. when it was time to administer Jenny's eye drops. I returned to my rest for another half hour afterwards.

After breakfast, I was about to start the washing-up as usual when Jenny said she wanted a short rest so I dealt with a few items on the laptop for what was left of the morning.

I went to continue patching the ceiling in the back bedroom for an hour or so and then left off for lunch.

I did intend resuming the work upstairs but other matters intervened and then I decided to try to resolve the Microsoft Word 365 problem with loading personalised templates. I found a very useful Youtube video on the Internet which went through the process of saving personalised templates and accessing them, which wasn't as straightforward as it could have been.

First, I had to go into the Options and then Save settings to input a folder for personalised templates. I used the default folder %Appdata%\Microsoft\Templates\, created my template and saved it as a .docm file. When I selected the file suffix, Word automatically selected the personal template folder in which to save it.

Accessing the template was not straightforward. I had to select More templates and then Personal before I could see it and select it.

Once I had done so, subsequently on loading Word 365, the new template was available aside the default document template.

So that was another Microsoft Mystery solved.

Next up was fixing the ability to create mailing lists in Outlook 365, which first required me copy all my contacts from Contacts to Contacts (This computer only). In doing so, I reviewed my contacts and deleted a lot of redundant ones. That kept me busy for the rest of the afternoon.

The only outstanding problem with Office 365 was to make my calendar reminders work.

## **Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023**

I was up for 9 a.m., earlier than of late, and, after breakfast, all ready to go down to Summerseat Garden Centre with Jenny when she said she had changed her mind and had too much to do at home. I changed into my working clothes and resumed filling in the back bedroom ceiling.

I broke off for lunch about 1 p.m. and, after lunch, Jenny went to Cuppa and a Chat with Lorna. I sat down to let my lunch settle before resuming work. I was trying to finish the ceiling today so I could start painting it on Saturday, tomorrow being grocery shopping day.

### **Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

We set off grocery shopping much later than planned so it was mid-afternoon before we returned home, having driven down to Unicorn in Chrolton and then back to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park.

I spent what was left of the day planning and implementing the TV recording schedule for the coming week.

### **Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

We had to go into Ramsbottom to collect some organic Mozzarella cheese we had ordered from Plentiful, having received a message while grocery shopping yesterday to say it had arrived.

We did our usual tour of the charity shops first.

I spent the rest of the day tidying up the TV programmes we had watched during the previous week or so.

### **Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

Jenny wanted to go for a walk down to Summerseat Garden Centre so off we went. We had a potter round but there was nothing we really wanted even though Jenny had a £1 voucher, which expired today, to spend. We walked back empty-handed. Had I taken the car, I would have bought a bag of organic manure/compost, which always came in handy.

I spent the rest of the day trying to sort out the problem with Outlook 365 not notifying me of recurring events. I gave up and logged yet another complaint using the feedback system. I wasn't holding my breath.

### **Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I finally managed to tackle the painting of the ceiling and coving in the back bedroom.

I tidied up my tools and Jenny helped me put more covers over the furniture that remained in the back bedroom before I started painting, after a lunch break.

Since the ceiling was bare plaster, I used the instructions on the paint container to dilute the paint with 40% of water. Based on the coverage information, I measured out the paint, added the water, mixed it well and started painting using a roller on the ceiling and a brush for the coving. My mixture ran out after I had painted about a third of the ceiling and coving. I made up another litre, which was just about enough to finish the job. It was turned 6 p.m. by the time I had tidied up and washed everything.

The ceiling looked a lot better and I was thinking that I might just manage to finish it with a single coat of paint rather than two, as the small cupboard needed.

## **Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

It was a nice day! After the usual morning tasks, I went out to mix up some more weed killer and sprayed the more troublesome, larger weeds in the block paving. I had just finished as Jenny had cut her finger on a tin of tuna she had opened for lunch. Rachel had dressed her finger, which had bled profusely and Jenny said she would ask the doctor to take a look at it when they reopened the surgery after lunch at 2 p.m.

Meanwhile, I prepared lunch and we ate in the conservatory.

After I had tidied up, we walked round to the surgery, first calling at the local small-holding to drop off some empty egg boxes for them. I waited outside while Jenny went to discuss her injury with the receptionist.

I was talking to our neighbours, Mike and Lorna, who were out walking with their grandson, Jacob, when Jenny joined us. All the medical staff were busy so she was not able to see anyone. Someone did put together a dressing pack, including some Steris-trops for her and told her to return if the cut did not start to heal.

We left our neighbours to return home and called for next week's Radio Times from the village convenience store.

At home, Jenny removed the dressing Rachel had put on, cleaned her finger with a cotton-wool pad I had wet with warm water from the kettle we had boiled for lunch and then I dressed it with two of the strips, some gauze and a plaster.

It was too late to resume work in the back bedroom so I brought my accounts up to date and started to look through next week's TV listings.

## **Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I gave the coving in the back bedroom another coat of paint. One coat on top of the wash coat was not going to be enough.

The whole room was a lot brighter already. Once the walls were painted in a lighter colour, it was going to look very nice.

I finished tidying up just in time for lunch and afterwards, while Jenny went for a walk with her friend Gwen, not forgetting Gwen's dog, Ruby, I cut my hair, trimmed my beard and had a bath.

I spent the last couple of hours of the afternoon editing the recent TV recordings and looking at more of next week's programmes.

## **Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I gave the coving in the back bedroom a third coat of paint and that finished the job. I was going to need more paint for the ceiling though.

I exposed a crack that had appeared in the back bedroom wall below the window and discovered a small part of it went straight through to the cavity. I mixed some mortar and filled the gap between the bricks of the internal wall, leaving that to set before filling the crack itself.

I spent the afternoon dealing with e-mails.

I had a telephone call from Sue in New Zealand. Her mum and my sister, Edith, had passed away at the age of 95 in the early hours of the morning, it being 11<sup>th</sup> August there. It wasn't exactly unexpected but it was still a bitter blow, having spent so much time with my elder sister when I was a child.

### **Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I scanned the TV listings on my PC for the various series we watched to ensure I had all the recordings for next week.

I filled the crack in the back bedroom wall and also the damage left by the removal of the second radiator support, having previously filled the first one.

I took the car round to D-CaFF, having arranged to drop off the boxes of publications from The Alzheimer's Society for Joani, before finding a seat at one of the tables. Joani had not brought her car so I arranged to drop them off at her home later.

After D-CaFF, the plan had been to make our way to Sainsbury's at Heaton Park for our weekly supply of groceries, calling for some paint at the Crown Decorating Centre and Matthew and Carrie's house on the way.

I bought another 2.5 L pot of Vinyl Matt White paint and we called for a chat in the garden with Matthew and Carrie, as arranged. After that, we decided it was too late to execute the rest of our itinerary and we came home, calling to drop off the publications for Joani. After talking with Joani for a while, we came home and decided to go out for a meal.

I booked a table at Owens restaurant in Ramsbottom for 8 p.m. and we had a very nice evening.

### **Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

We went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park and Tesco at Prestwich. Yellow Tail Chardonnay at Sainsbury's store was £7.75 and at Tesco, £7.50. It was originally £6.00. The price hike was 25% at Tesco. With inflation supposedly now running around 13%, the increase was around double that. This was a clear case of profiteering. Needless to say we didn't buy any.

At home, I tidied up the TV programmes we had watched during the previous week, in between the odd domestic duty.

I telephoned my nephew, John and my niece, Julie to let them know about Edith's demise. I still needed to contact my other nephew, Andrew.

Jenny and I also went for a short walk before tea to help with Jenny's exercising of her leg.

### **Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

We spent the day at the old school testing and pricing electrical equipment that had been donated in readiness for the next table-top sale on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

### **Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

It was a very wet morning and the day started off slowly.

After the usual morning tasks, I was going to paint the back bedroom ceiling but I first wanted to check out a tower system I had brought home from the old school jumble. That booted into Windows 7 nicely.

I shut that down and I was about to prepare for the decorating when Jenny pointed out it was approaching lunchtime and I realised I would not finish in time so I went back to the tower system and checked its specification, which was not great. I created my own user and deleted the one that was on the system. The previous owner had, wisely, removed all his or her data.

I checked my e-mails on my laptop, the only one of importance being from my niece, Sue, in NZ.

Meanwhile, the rain had stopped and Jenny had gone for a walk.

After Jenny returned, we had lunch and I gave the back bedroom ceiling a covering of white matt paint. That seemed to go well. I cleaned up and left the ceiling to dry out.

### **Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I was a little disappointed that the ceiling I had painted was a little patchy in places and needed another coat of paint, although it was not unexpected.

Jenny suggested we go for a shopping trip to Ramsbottom so that took care of our morning.

We started with a tour of the charity shops and then called at Plentiful for a few items and to order a couple more for delivery on Friday, which we would collect.

We walked round to Morrisons where Yellow Tail Chardonay was £7 a bottle, the cheapest price around. It used to be £6 a bottle so that was an increase of just over 16%, with inflation funning at between 10% and 15%. Other Yellow Tail wines had risen from £6 to £8 a bottle, an increase of 33%. I later checked the price in its native Australia and found the average price was \$6, which equated to just over £3. Somebody, somewhere was making a lot of money and we, the consumers, were being ripped off, even allowing for the import duty. To make matters worse, Morrisons has a sign saying that there was a discount of 25% on the purchase of 3 or more bottles of their best wine, so I bought 3

bottles of Chardonnay. When I did not receive my 25% discount, I queried it and was told it only applied to the “Best Wine” so I asked what that meant. I was shown that it only applied to bottles with “Best Wine” printed on the bottle-top. Yellow Tail was not one of those.

Jenny also called at Tesco while I waited in the car. They had no copies of next week’s Radio Times, which should have been on the shelf today and no Ecover washing-up liquid or soap powder. What a waste of time that was.

Our last call was to Clarks hobbies shop where Jenny bought two 50 packs of tulip bun cases for £3.67 each. They were £2.95 for 12 at Sainsbury’s store.

We came home for lunch and while Jenny was preparing it, we discovered that the newer of our two Miele fridge-freezers was not draining the water that condensed inside the fridge. Instead it was overspilling and running out of the door when it was opened. We had the same problem with the Bosch fridge freezer we dumped and which the Miele replaced. It was nowhere near as good as the first one we bought.

We emptied the fridge compartment, except for the bottled drinks and cans and made room in the older one for the contents. I planned to have a look at it after lunch.

The first job was to pull the fridge-freezer out of its corner and Jenny wanted it turning around so that the back of the fridge faced the back wall rather than the conservatory wall so I turned it 90° counter-clockwise, leaving enough room to work on the back of it.

There was no obvious way of accessing most of the upper part of the unit from the back; there was access only to the compressors at the bottom. I decided to try to tackle the problem from inside the fridge compartment.

I suspected the condensed water was not draining because the drain tube was blocked so I thought I’d try rodding it, to see if that was the problem and I could clear it.

The connectors on my rodding set were too large to fit into the hole. I thought my best option was to use some plastic-coated, stiff wire with enough flexibility to handle corners. I was going to try a long length of the positive or negative cable from a length of 1.5mm twin and earth but that was in my garage loft and the step-ladders were in the back bedroom. Instead, I found some coated garden wire in the gardening box, although it wasn’t as stiff as I would have liked. (It must have been its age!)

Anyway, I gave it a try and the first attempt did seem to meet some obstruction but I thought I had managed to reach the bottom and when I removed it there was a gurgling sound from the fridge as though the water was draining. I repeated the exercise and the wire went down the pipe much more easily. The gurgling sound was repeated.

I thought I would leave it to see how that went and if it had not resolved the problem, I would use my original plan of action with the 1.5mm cable.

By this time we were approaching 5 p.m so I sat down in the lounge for a rest.

### **Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I gave the back bedroom ceiling another coat of paint and I just had enough to finish the job. It looked a lot better, thank goodness.

It took ages to clean the roller and I hate to think how much water I used, being on a water meter. It would probably have been cheaper to throw the roller away and buy a new one.

I finished just in time for lunch.

During the afternoon, I rearranged the furniture in the room so that I could access all four walls to clean and paint them.

### **Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I took a day off decorating to cut the grass and trim the edges back and front and do a little more work in the garden. I finished off by cleaning the lawn mower and edge trimmer.

### **Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

We went grocery shopping as planned to Unicorn in Chorlton and Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park. We went round the M60 on the outward journey and came back through Manchester, that being a more direct route between the two shops.

I spent the afternoon sorting out the TV recordings for next week, Jenny having decided not to go into Ramsbottom to collect a couple of items from Plentiful until tomorrow.

I sorted out a problem with EPG123 which was clocking up a couple of errors when it updated the TV guide for Windows Media Centre on the old Windows 7 desktop system. It was reporting that it could not find the listings for a couple of channels and I had to remove them from the configuration of EPG123.

### **Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

We went into Ramsbottom, mainly to collect the items we had ordered from Plentiful.

Jenny wanted to obtain some information on exercises at the swimming baths first, so we walked round and asked about water Tai Chi.

We walked back to tour the charity shops and called at Tesco for a couple of things we didn't obtain yesterday, before making our way to Plentiful, where we added a couple more items to our purchases.

We came home for a late lunch and I spent the afternoon tidying up the TV programmes we had watched during the week.



### **Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

We were at the old school all day, testing and pricing electrical equipment for the table-top sale next Saturday.

### **Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2023**

It was a morning of household duties and finishing off the e-mail to my niece and her husband in New Zealand.

After lunch, I had a look at the version 4 development of my web site which was stored on my laptop before it threw a wobbler and I had to reinstall Windows. Fortunately I had the opportunity to back it up to an external drive before wiping the hard drive (I think I mentioned this previously). I made a little progress but it was time-consuming and I was aware I needed to progress the work on the back bedroom.

I started to wash the walls down with sugar soap, ready for painting and found a few more dents and cracks that needed attention, a job for another day, since I didn't finish until nearly 5 p.m., by which time I was perspiring so much, it was dripping from my forehead. I was conscious I needed a shower. I should have been so lucky. The shower was still out of action, so it was a case of a quick scrub down in the bath.

### **Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023**

I didn't sleep well. I awoke during the night with terrible stomach pain and a nasty pain in my left knee.

The latter had been troubling me on and off for some time and I was usually able to press on and ignore it, as it came and went but this was different and I put it down to climbing on and off the stool in the back bedroom yesterday, cleaning the walls.

My stomach pain I could not fathom unless that also had the same cause, due to stretching and the vigorous cleaning activity, irritating my hiatus hernia.

Both pains subsided after a little while and I was able to sleep on.

I awoke early with chest pain and my cough was back again. The omeprazole I though was working clearly wasn't.

After breakfast and pot washing, I sat in my chair and edited some TV recordings from last evening, with a hot-water bottle stuck to my chest. That seemed to help and my cough was not so bad.

Apart from an hour and a half's walk with Jenny towards the end of the afternoon, I spent the day working on version 4 of my web site, with a hot water bottle on my chest.

### **Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023**

I had a better night, with a hot water bottle on my chest, yet gain.

My cough seemed to be subsiding a little.

I resumed work in the back bedroom, filling in the new cracks I had found and one or two other small blemishes I had seen while washing down the walls. That didn't take long and I left it all to set, resuming work on version 4 of my web site.

Later in the day, I inspected the plastering and found that the larger cracks on the window wall had not properly dried out, which was to be expected. The smaller indentations on the other three walls were fine so I sanded them down and then started to paint the smaller wall opposite the window wall. My plan was to cut in the edges with a brush and leave the larger areas to the roller, the one exception being a small part of the wall I was painting first between the door to the cupboard and the side wall.

It took longer than I expected to finish that and I washed up just in time for tea.

### **Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I spent most of the day (about 7 hours) painting the tricky bits in the back bedroom, cutting in the edges round the coving and the skirting as well as the corners, the window and the wall sockets. It was hard work and I was completely shattered at the end of it all.

It was midnight before I retired to my bed.

### **Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I was up at just after 7 a.m. because I had forgotten to put out the refuse bins for collection the previous evening and they should have been out by 7 a.m. Past experience taught me that the bins were not emptied before 8 a.m., so I had time to dress and take the bins to the top of the driveway.

I hadn't slept well and I still felt tired, so my concentration was not so good. Nevertheless, I managed to drive to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park and, afterwards, Tesco at Prestwich for this week's grocery shopping, remaining in the car and snoozing at the latter while Jenny picked up a few odds and ends.

I had called at the Crown Decorating Centre on the way out for some more paint for the walls, the price of which had rocketed and subsequently at Matthew and Carrie's house to have a quick look at Matt's development of an office shack in the garden.

Returning home, I finished off the recording schedule for the coming week and then fell asleep in my chair for a little while. That didn't do me a lot of good and I was feeling very tired and aching all over.

## **Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

It was not a good day. Things didn't go well. First, the desktop PC would not power on. It tried and then died a death several times. The only way I could try again each time it failed was to unplug the power and then plug it in again. After several attempts, it did power on. I wasn't sure what the problem was. It could have been a loose connection somewhere or it could have been a faulty power supply.

I decided to have a look at setting up the tower system I brought home from the old school.

The first stumbling block was the network driver was not installed. I managed to transfer Belloc Adviser to the tower system from my laptop using a memory stick and that told me what the mother board was. I assumed the network port was on the mother board and proceeded to download the network driver for it onto the laptop. I transferred that to the tower system and ran the installation, which worked.

I was then side-tracked into loading Avast free anti-virus software, which also worked well but I thought it caused a problem so I unloaded it again. I subsequently discovered there was no problem.

I then discovered that my laptop could not read any of my data from my external hard drive. I tried shutting down and restarting the laptop and I also tried removing and reconnecting the hard drive. Nothing worked. I thought I had lost everything I had done during the past week.

I decided to see if I could read the portable hard drive on my desktop. Fortunately I could so I backed up as much of the work I could remember I had done onto its hard drive.

I reconnected the drive to my laptop and gave it another try. It worked! I didn't have a clue what the problem was.

I returned to working on the tower system from the old school. My attempts to load the drivers and the software for my old Hauppauge WinTV HVR 1900 failed miserably.

I was not happy at all. It also dawned on me that the drivers would be no good for replacing my existing desktop with this tower PC and these drivers because I was using different hardware for recording TV programmes on the desktop.

One can't win them all. The trouble was, I wasn't winning any!

I tidied up the tower system and put it on one side for the present.

A lovely tea of beef stroganoff with rice and asparagus with a couple of glasses of Yellow Tail Merlot followed by raspberries with soya yoghurt and a glass of Yellow Tail Chardonnay, then two mugs of tea with biscuits did a great deal to make my day.

## **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

We spent most of the day at the old school working on the electrical jumble.

### **Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I had arranged to be at Matthew and Carrie's house for about 10:30 to take a load of rubbish to the tip in my trailer for them. It was nearly that by the time I had moved all the rubbish from the trailer into the car boot, hooked up the empty trailer and checked all the tyre pressures, so I was about ten minutes late, not that it mattered.

I helped Matthew load his rubbish into the trailer and we headed to the recycling centre in Bury, which was not very busy and we parked up next to the garden waste skip, which was handy for Matthew. Matthew unloaded the trailer while I started on the boot contents and he helped me finish off. By the time we left, there was a long queue for the dump.

I dropped Matthew off at home and picked up a raised bed he had dismantled and didn't want, which I stacked under the car port for the present.

After tidying up, I picked more blackberries, having harvested quite a few yesterday, had lunch and then painted the walls in the back bedroom using the roller. That and washing the roller, etc. took about three hours and I was shattered.

### **Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

I spent another seven hours in the back bedroom without a break, cutting in round the edges of the walls and the sockets so I would be able to use the roller to paint the walls for a second time.

### **Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

In the morning, we went to Tesco in Bury to buy some items, primarily for the old school Afternoon Tea gluten-free attendees on Thursday, so that Jenny could continue the preparation of the gluten-free sandwiches and cakes, which she had started yesterday, tomorrow morning.

When we arrived home I suddenly did not feel well - somewhat dizzy, and a little sick, with aching shoulders and neck at the back. It seemed like a mild onset of vertigo, which I experienced some time ago for the first time and not at all since.

As a result, I did not paint the walls in the back bedroom as planned. Instead I brought my accounts up to date and looked for a car insurance quote for the coming year that was cheaper than the extortionate renewal price from the AA.

### **Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023**

I worked on the minutes of the Tottington District Civic Society A.G.M. and dealt with my e-mails, etc. during the morning.

We were round at the old school just after 12:30 for the afternoon tea and entertainment from the Greenmount Strummers, who, I thought, played and sang better than ever, from 1 to 3 p.m. Afterwards, we helped tidy up.

It was a nice ending to the month.