

Greenmount – December 2008

December has got off to an early start. The tree was up, adorned and lit by the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the second batch of Christmas cards was wending it's way to the lucky recipients by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup>. I forgot to include the begging letter.

We awoke on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to four inches of snow. Not having to go out in it to work, I thought it all looked very pretty. I cleared the drive and put Rachel's car on the road. It took her over four hours to travel 10 miles (16 Km), arriving at work a good 3½ hours late. Jenny, who drives only a couple of miles to the crossing she patrols, couldn't get there at all. She made it out of the estate and just up the road to the church, then, with everyone sliding about in all directions, she decided to turn round and come home. This she managed with a passing gentleman's assistance, pushing as her wheels just spun round in the snow. At least she drove the car back in one piece, unlike her supervisor's husband, who is a policeman and whose car had been hit just before Jenny reported in to say she couldn't make it. Ho! Ho! Ho! What's all this, then?

We had a very quiet Christmas this year, with just the three of us at home. Christmas Eve was spent dining at an Indian restaurant with Matthew and Carrie, just down the road from their house. Rachel was kind enough to drive so the rest of us were able to make merry. The meal was somewhat disappointing and we shall not be dining there again.

New Year's Eve was not so quiet. Jenny normally prepares food and we usually have a few neighbours round to eat, drink, chat and drink some more. On this occasion, our good friend, Mike, persuaded us all to go to the Cricket Club disco.

Now, being a jazz enthusiast with a particular interest in early and traditional jazz, discos are not my kind of enjoyment. I was assured of a place as far away from the DJ as possible and was looking forward to a good old chat with people I don't see very often. On arriving, we were told that the various parties had been allocated tables and we were directed to ours – adjacent to one of the largest speakers I have ever seen with sound cables that looked like they could carry all the power required by the national grid. Not a good sign, I thought and I hadn't brought my wire cutters.

Then the music (I use the term in its loosest sense) started. Our conversation degenerated into sign language and I was beginning to wish I had brought ear muffs, pencil and paper.

There was a brief interlude for the buffet to be served, although they might as well not have bothered because I was almost deaf by this time. At least it has loosened my ear wax (see previous monthly updates).

Three pints of German lager and a brandy (they had run out of single malt – obviously not my evening) later, I was sitting alone at the table and reflecting on the year's events, everyone else having left me to dance, when I was dragged onto the dance floor by my tie, at the other end of which was an older lady and very good friend (until then), who had, some years earlier, undergone a double hip replacement. I thought if she can dance to this racket, I'm sure I can and the German lager took over.

After that, I was up on the dance floor (vertically, not horizontally) quite frequently.

Jenny managed to win two raffle prizes, both of which were at the bottom end of the scale. I am pleased to say our friends managed to win some decent prizes, including a DAB radio and two bottles of wine.

Mike and Lorna came back to our house for a coffee and a chat, leaving about 2 am and we managed to crawl into bed about 2:30 on New Year's Day.

And so ends the saga of 2008. This has not been a very good year for the family and, in many respects, I am pleased that it is over. We shall see what 2009 brings, although, with the economy in England being in such a bad way, I can't help feeling one should be seeking residence in a country less obsessed with finance and more concerned about the welfare of its people.

A Happy New Year to all.