

Greenmount December 2019

Sunday, 1st December 2019

We went grocery shopping to Unicorn in Chorlton, Sainsbury's in Sale and Waitrose at Broadheath. We took our own sandwiches, left over from yesterday's venture and ate them in the car before having a cup of tea at Waitrose.

The M60 outbound was, not unexpectedly, very busy as far as the Trafford Centre. Returning, it wasn't too bad.

We didn't leave until turned 11 a.m., having performed all of the regular morning chores, fetched the Christmas tree and decorations down from the garage loft and assembled the tree in the lounge so that Rachel could decorate it while we were out.

Rachel was still working on the tree when we returned at about 5:15 p.m. and she finished it off before tea. It looked very nice and we planned to apply the finishing touches in the morning.

We took Rachel down to Bury to catch the tram back to Manchester at about 9:30 p.m. She was spending the night at her flat and returning the following evening.

Monday, 2nd December 2019

We put the finishing touches to the Christmas tree, tidied up the lounge (which included cleaning the stove) and put out the rest of the Christmas items in the lounge. Believe it or not, that took most of the day.

I also ordered the whole leg of organic lamb for New Year's Day dinner for seven.

Tuesday, 3rd December 2019

I put the empty Christmas tree box back in the garage loft, put the Christmas lights round the hall mirror, cleaned the patio door in the kitchen and cleaned the tiles round the door. The plan was to install some Christmas lights round the door but since it was getting late we left that for another day.

I stayed up late to keep an eye on a process to produce an Mpeg 2 movie file from an MP 4 format. The conversion took a while because the whole video had to be re-encoded, requiring a lot of processing power.

I took the opportunity to update my web site with November's diary.

Wednesday, 4th December 2019

Apart from dealing with TV recordings, which took longer than intended, I performed the usual routine chores, put up the Christmas lights in the kitchen, put the last of the emptied Christmas storage boxes back in the garage loft, catalogued a couple more LPs in my audio media list, planned our day out to Manchester tomorrow and helped a little with the preparation of the vegetables for tea.

I had planned on fetching the wood from across the road but didn't make it.

Thursday, 5th December 2019

We had a day out in Manchester again, visiting the eye hospital for a follow-up to Jenny's last appointment. The result was to keep applying the drops, plus some additional drops for another month, having a third appointment on 2nd January.

On the way back, we popped into the village surgery and I arranged a second appointment for my digestive system. The double dose of tablets did not seem to be working as well as I thought. Matters had taken a turn for the worse today and I felt terrible.

Jenny left her new eye drop prescription with the receptionist and she said it would be with the chemist after 5 p.m. the following day.

Friday, 6th December 2019

Much of the pain from yesterday had dissipated enough for me to have a good night's rest and I was left with more discomfort than actual agony.

I spent the day putting in the TV recordings for the week and processing the recent recordings ready for viewing.

I also responded to messages about my anti-virus software licence renewal, due soon, by searching online for the best AV software and the cost. The conclusion to which I came was to leave it until nearer the time.

Saturday, 7th December 2019

I was feeling too poorly to go to the village drop-in with Jenny. Instead, I stayed in and washed the dishes and the juicer after making my fresh orange juice for breakfast.

I spent the day listening to my Jazz CDs and tidying up the TV recordings we had watched throughout the week.

Jenny was home for lunch time and said I had been missed at the drop-in, which was nice. She had called at the pharmacy to collect her eye drops. She was told that they had not received her prescription. I asked her if she had confirmed with the pharmacist that the new eye drops had not been added to the existing prescription. She said she hadn't

and went back to check. They hadn't and, what's more, the pharmacist said they did not have any in stock, something she did not mention on Jenny's first visit. Realising the urgency, she said she would order some for Monday.

I was left wondering what the matter was with people today. Had IQs tumbled over the last couple of decades? Weren't people taught to think anymore? No wonder the human race was on the brink of extinction. People seemed to have no initiative, no commitment, no pride in themselves.

So it would be necessary to visit the surgery again on Monday and stick a rocket up somebody's backside.

Back to the plot.

After finishing all of the work on my recorded media, I resumed the cataloguing of my LPs and, not surprisingly, ran out of storage space for them, stacking the excess under the coffee table for the present.

Sunday, 8th December 2019

I felt poorly today again. It didn't stop me driving to Home Bargains in Bury, Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath for our weekly grocery shop though. Traffic wasn't too bad and we made good time going and returning.

We called at Matthew and Carrie's house on the way back to collect some flowers they had for Jenny and we stayed and chatted for about an hour.

Monday, 9th December 2019

Dare I say I was starting to feel a little better? We had planned to walk to Ramsbottom in the winter sunshine but we set off too late.

We started with a trip to the chemist to see if the prescription had arrived for Jenny's eye drops. It hadn't and neither had the prescription from the doctor. We left the pharmacist with a copy of the paperwork from the hospital to make sure they obtained the correct medication and with some urgency.

We went round to the surgery and the receptionist said they had the paperwork from the hospital on file and it was in the hands of the practice pharmacist. Why the practice needed a pharmacist when there was one at the chemist's shop was beyond me. The paperwork would be given some priority, we were told.

The plan was to call in at the chemist later in the day.

We came home and drove to Ramsbottom where I obtained two 100 watt, Edison screw bulbs for the rear outside light, a new scrubbing brush and a tile grout removal tool from the hardware shop. The tour of the charity shops was relatively fruitless. We did obtain some Christmas cards.

We came home for lunch and I spent the afternoon working on TV recordings. Jenny worked in the kitchen, making bread and our tea. She was so busy, she forgot about the planned re-visit to the chemist.

Just after lunch, Lynn called in for a brief chat and a little later, Sheila rang from Huddersfield. Jenny and the two ladies had planned a Christmas meal in a week or so.

Tuesday, 10th December 2019

I was slow to start (what's new?) and my throat, which had been feeling alright for the last day or so, was starting to be a little irritable again. I also had some discomfort down the right-hand side of my chest and a little irritation in my stomach, just as I thought things were improving at last. Fortunately, I had decided to keep my appointment with the GP at 1:30 p.m.

I replaced the bulb in one of the front outside lights that had not been working for a while. I took the opportunity to give the lamp a bit of a clean. I made a mental note to take the lamps down and give them a good clean and repaint them next spring/summer.

I also replaced a bulb in the lamp at the back because the old bulb had not been working for some time. With any luck all three bulbs should be working again. The three-headed lamp post has needed a good refurbish for a long time as well.

As I finished that, Jenny said it was time to go round to the chemist for her eye drops. It was a case of third time lucky. Jenny went to the hair dressers and I came home to find our neighbour across the road starting to deliver the wood that had been cut down and which I said I would like for my fire.

I gave him a hand to bring it across until the rain started again.

I came in for a short while, until it was time for my doctor's appointment.

I saw a young, female trainee doctor and the result of the consultation was that she suspected I might have an ulcer. She asked me to book an appointment with the nurse for some blood tests, which I subsequently did for Friday morning and she was also going to arrange for an appointment for a gastroscopy.

The blood test was to check for internal bleeding, measuring iron levels and the blood count.

I came home and started to prepare my lunch since Jenny was still at the hair salon. Jenny came back before lunch was ready and we dined together, as usual.

After lunch, I took a call from National Windscreens. The company had replaced the car's heated rear window back in February of this year and I reported at the time that, on the new rear window, the sixth element up was not working. I was asked to monitor and confirm it and, if the fault persisted, it would be replaced free of charge. With the warm summer, I had not used the heated rear window until recently and, sure enough, the fault was still there so I had finally reported it to National Windscreens as a fault earlier in the day. I explained I had sent E-mails at the time it was originally replaced explaining the

situation and I was now asked to forward them on to the branch manager who would send me an E-mail to which I could reply.

I spent the rest of the afternoon working on the rewrite of my web site.

Wednesday, 11th December 2019

I sorted out a date for the car's rear window replacement with National Windscreens and spent the rest of the day working on my web site rewrite.

Thursday, 12th December 2019

We were up quite late and I was feeling a little better. I washed the dishes as usual and tidied out the stove after its recent use, although we didn't have a fire this day.

We went to vote, the intention being to ensure we did not re-elect a Conservative government and then called at the local co-operative store for some cash before heading up to the Duckworth Arms for lunch with Gwen and Frank. We enjoyed the meal and the company.

I sorted out the TV recordings for the past couple of days before settling down to watch a couple of TV quiz programmes at tea time and then a couple of recorded programmes, as usual.

Friday, 13th December 2019

They say Friday the 13th is an unlucky day. On this occasion it was more than that. It was a disastrous day for the whole country, with a huge majority in the House of Commons for the Conservative Party, led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson. This was the man who had misled the queen and illegally closed down parliament in order to push through our country's departure from the European Union without any kind of trade deal. How anyone could vote for a party led by someone who would stoop to such tactics was beyond me. The man simply could not be trusted.

All I could say was that the people of this country would get exactly what they deserved. We could look forward to creeping privatisation of the NHS and higher tax breaks for the wealthy. If the worst happened, at least they couldn't blame me. I didn't vote for him.

Worse still, locally we had lost a really good MP in James Frith (Lab) who had been extremely active supporting local and community groups and charities. He was replaced by James Daily (Con) by the slimmest of majorities. I knew James quite well as a councillor and in that role he had also been supportive of local people. I hoped that he would continue to be so now he was an MP but being elected to Parliament could change a person, particularly if they sought to rise through the ranks.

I refer you to my piece of philosophy entitled "[What is Politics?](#)"

After the usual dish washing session, I started producing the Christmas card list for 2019 while Jenny started writing the cards.

We left off that task to prepare for D-CaFF, the village dementia café, which had a Christmas theme and I dressed up as Santa. We had a Christmas lunch, a sing-along and we were entertained by the children from the village primary school singing carols. We finished off with “The Twelve Days of Christmas” with each of the twelve tables singing their line and standing while they did so. That was followed by “We Wish You a Merry Christmas” to round off the session.

We called at the local convenience store for the Radio Times on the way home.

Safely indoors, I disrobed and showered, having been very warm inside the Santa suit for about three hours.

I finished off the Christmas card list before tea and marked the TV recordings for the following day in the Radio Times after tea. I was too tired to go into the cold conservatory and put in the recordings. I left that for early the following morning.

Saturday, 14th December 2019

I started my day by putting in the TV recordings for the day, not having time to do the whole week.

I was due at Asda, Pilsworth at noon for a two hour session as Santa for the local Rotary Club. I arrived in good time and located the sled parked in the end of one of the trolley bays near the store entrance. I went inside the store intending to use the disabled toilet in which to put on the Santa outfit I keep at home and which belonged to D-CaFF. The toilet was locked so I used the baby-change facility instead and subsequently took up my seat on the sled.

I expected to exchange seasonal pleasantries with passers-by and to wave to children. I didn't expect to be chatting with children next to me in the sled! A lot of parents also took photographs. It was a pleasant experience and it all made the two hours pass quite quickly. The weather could have been kinder, although the sled had a roof and was also protected from the hail showers and much of the wind by the trolley bay.

I was relieved by my successor at 2 p.m., both of us using the baby-change facility.

I called at Matthew and Carrie's home on the return journey to drop off some mince pies Jenny had asked me to give them. Their friends, Chris and Heather were there. I had not seen them since Matthew and Carrie's wedding.

At home, I had lunch and sorted out the recent TV recordings before attempting to repair the Christmas lights in the entrance hall. After an hour or so, I gave up and consigned them to the electrical garbage.

It took me about five minutes to repair the Christmas lights in the kitchen. They were not working due to a loose bulb. Unfortunately, one of the decorative fittings had

dropped off and it was nowhere to be seen. A search for that would be conducted on Monday.

Sunday, 15th December 2019

We headed off to Unicorn in Chorlton for our weekly shop. Not unexpectedly for this time of year, traffic was heavy on the M60 until we passed the north entrance to the Trafford Centre shopping mall.

After Unicorn, we made our way along the A56 to Saisbury's store in Sale. Finding no free parking spots, we left after a tour of the car park and continued our outward journey along the A56 towards Altrincham. That was horrendous, with two lanes of very slow moving traffic for a good few miles. The problem, when we reached it, was a broken-down vehicle in the nearside lane as we approached the major junction just before our turn-off to Waitrose at Broadheath. I had the good sense to use the outside lane, which did move more quickly, speeding up as we approached the incident.

We bought what we needed at Waitrose and headed home. The traffic was fairly light but not helped by drivers in both lanes along the A56 heading back to the M60 who insisted on driving at 25 m.p.h. in a 30 m.p.h. limit and subsequently, 30 m.p.h. in a 40 m.p.h. limit.

The frustration continued on the M60 with people in the fast lane driving at well under the speed limit. If people didn't want to do 70 m.p.h., why use the fast lane when there was room for them in the middle lane?

The fun continued along the A56 to Bury and most of the way home.

When we arrived home, Jenny alighted and came down the drive to activate the car port lights. As she did so, she spotted a pigeon wandering about on the floor under the car port. I picked it up gently and it seemed to be alright except that it seemed doped. We found a box with some holes in it, put a bed of straw in it and put the pigeon in it, placing the box on the floor in the kitchen for the night with the lid secured. We later gave it some food (bread moistened with water) and planned to take it up to the local animal sanctuary the following morning if it survived the night. It did not seem injured, just disorientated and unable to fly, but it was hard to tell.

I parked the car and we brought in the groceries.

While Jenny put away the groceries, I sorted out the TV recordings for Tuesday and while she prepared tea, I dealt with the recordings from today.

Monday 16th December 2019

The first task of the day was to check on the pigeon. It was reasonably lively but we didn't let it out of the box because we were not sure it could fly.

After breakfast we set off to the local wild bird sanctuary to see if they would take the pigeon. I had telephoned the sanctuary several times and, although their Facebook page

said they were open, the telephone message said they were closed. I had also tried the Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary but I was told they did not take wildlife and I should take the pigeon to any vet. Apparently all vets had a duty of care to wildlife and there was no charge.

At the bird sanctuary, a young lady answered the door bell and told me the sanctuary was temporarily closed because it was being refurbished. She advised me to take it to the Armac veterinary clinic in Bury, the clinic being the one used by the sanctuary.

We drove down to Bury and Jenny took in the pigeon in the box while I waited outside in the car in case there was any issue with parking temporarily in that area of The Rock. Jenny had to fill in a form at the clinic.

We then went down the motorway to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park, having failed to find a parking spot at Sale the previous day. There was also a large Home Bargains' store next to Sainsbury's store and, having driven past the one in Bury, Jenny made a bee-line for that first.

It was 2:30 p.m. by the time we had lunch at home and my throat had been giving me some discomfort all morning. I was thankful for a drink of water at last.

We had planned to go into Ramsbottom in the afternoon but it was too late in the day for that.

I processed the TV recordings from the previous day and started to put in the recordings for the rest of the week. I also brought the accounts up to date.

I was going to leave off the aforementioned task to walk up to the post office at Holcombe Brook with Jenny to post the Christmas Cards we had already written but she had to go on her own because my sister, Barbara, telephoned to discuss the specification of a new laptop and we were chatting for over an hour.

After tea, I sent a message to Ideal Standard requesting a replacement plastic insert for the bathroom washbasin tap. The existing one, fixed in the top of the tap at the rear had broken and both the "Ideal Standard" logo and the hot and cold indicators had worn off.

All in all, it had been a busy day and I felt quite tired. My digestive system was giving me some grief as well. The sooner I had the gastroscopy and got to the bottom of the problem the better. I was assuming that whatever it was, the problem could be treated and rectified but I was also aware that might not be the case.

Tuesday, 17th December 2019

I started the day by looking at the network connections on my laptop using Microsoft's TCPview software to see if there was any suspicious activity, although I would have expected my security software would have identified it if there were.

Google Chrome seemed to connect to some dubious sites so I blocked them using my firewall and subsequently ended up with no Internet connectivity.

I left off to go into Ramsbottom with Jenny, primarily for some more Christmas cards from one of the charity shops and we toured the rest except Bleakholt which was not open Mondays and Tuesdays. I bought a DVD along with the Christmas cards.

I also discovered that the hardware shop stocked the 21 inch bow saw blades I used.

Our last visit was to the new organic shop in Bridge Street. Jenny wanted 500 grams of organic caster sugar. Unfortunately, there was only 341 grams left so she bought it all, using our own container.

After lunch at home I lit a fire before finishing off the Christmas cards and then returning to the computer, dealing with the TV recordings and sorting out the firewall problem.

During the afternoon, Sylvia from the bungalow across the back came round with an electrical problem. Her bathroom lights were tripping her circuit breaker. The issue turned out to be a faulty halogen bulb and the new Tesco LED replacement also being faulty. The second Tesco LED replacement worked and solved the problem. Sylvia sorted this problem herself after talking to me and brought the two bulbs round for me to check, which confirmed the halogen bulb had failed and that the Tesco LED bulb she had tried first was also registering an open-circuit.

The chap from National Windscreens arrived about 5 p.m., having been delayed, to replace the faulty heated rear window in the car and took about an hour and a half. The fitter also removed a loose clip from inside the rear cover of the hatch which had been rattling round inside when the hatch was opened and closed since I had bought the car over fifteen years ago. And there was me thinking it was a VW special feature!

Wednesday, 18th December 2019

We were up late again and by the time we had showered, had breakfast, done the dishes and I had dealt with my E-mails and updated my web site, it was lunchtime!

Much of the E-mail activity was as a result of my sister's (Barbara's) PC slow running issue and I compiled and sent her some advice on how to speed up her computer.

Barbara had telephoned me to discuss it and I talked her through what she needed to do and subsequently, she involved her daughter, Julie and we chatted about the problem. The main issue seemed to be the fact that it was an old laptop and the processor only had a single core.

I talked Julie through some ways of improving matters and left Norton Utilities running.

After lunch I lit a fire and decided to spruce up my computer as well. I left a defragmentation of the system drive running while I went upstairs and finished off putting the clean sheets on our bed for Jenny.

I rounded off my productive day by peeling the spuds for tea and subsequently mashing the boiled potatoes. Who said I couldn't cook?

Thursday, 19th December 2019

My day started with a rummage through three of the four waste bins, the exception being the food and garden waste, thank goodness. I was looking for the plastic fitting that was missing from one of the bulbs on the set of Christmas lights round the back door. I had thought that it had possibly fallen off into one of the waste boxes we used to sort the waste before dumping it into the appropriate bin.

I had no luck with that and decided to have some lunch after a good wash.

After lunch, I pottered round tidying up a few things that were lying around. I had discovered that items were easier to find if one put them away where they should be so long as one remembered where one had put them.

Friday, 20th December 2019

It took me all day to put in the TV recordings for the coming week and tidy up the recorded programmes we had watched for the past couple of weeks.

Saturday, 21st December 2019

It was our weekly grocery shopping day and we started off with a visit to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park where we saw Frank and Gwen, our friend from up the road apiece. To be more precise, they saw us first. We chatted for a short while, blocking the aisle, before going our separate ways.

As we were looking for a checkout, a very helpful lady assistant offered to scan our basket of shopping using one of those smart shopping devices and then she downloaded it to a machine on which I could pay using my debit card. That saved us a long wait in the queue.

We took the route through town to Unicorn in Chorlton and then, as usual, the A56 on to Waitrose at Broadheath. Traffic was quite light both going and returning home via the M60 and we made good time coming home.

My stomach seemed to be a lot better until I had lunch at Waitrose and I suspect it was the sauce for the coronation chicken salad that did it because it contained dairy items.

It eased off again after tea, my fish being accompanied by lightly blanched cabbage, spinach and loads of lightly roasted garlic. We didn't have the usual couple glasses of wine either. I stuck to an apple and mango J2O. It wasn't organic but I could cope with apples and mango.

Sunday, 22nd December 2019

When I awoke, my tickly cough was back, although it wasn't quite so bad. The right side of my chest felt like it was being crushed. Apart from that, I was fine.

Would you believe it took an hour to wash, wipe and put away the dirty dishes before breakfast? I had reset the alarm for 8 a.m. and it took us half an hour to wake up properly so it was 10 a.m. before we sat down in the lounge after breakfast.

It was a dull, grey morning again and I could well understand why a lot of animals hibernated through the winter months, not that it was particularly cold outside for the time of year.

I was due in Ramsbottom at Tesco for 11 a.m. for another two hour session as Santa for the Rotary Club. I dressed at home and Jenny dropped me off a few minutes late, which wasn't a problem because the chaps hadn't finished positioning the sled.

My replacement for the next two hours arrived early and waited until nearly 1 p.m. before changing into his Santa suit. Jenny arrived before he was ready and, after talking to two children before leaving, I hopped in the car and departed. It wouldn't do to have two Santas in view!

I had a quick snack at home followed by a brief rest and a shower, then we off out again.

We left at 3:15 p.m. to collect Marie (Bob was not feeling well) for a meal with Matt and Carrie at the Duckworth Arms. The meal was very good and the service was excellent. We dropped Marie off at her house on the way home.

Monday, 23rd December 2019

It was a cleaning and tidying day in preparation for our guests for dinner on Tuesday.

We took time out after lunch to relax for an hour or so, which gave me chance to listen to a Jazz CD.

I did a little more development of my revised web site and reached the point of where I wanted to display a slide show of images.

Tuesday, 24th December 2019

We started the day with a trip to Bury by bus. The main objective was to collect our organic turkey from Marks and Spencer.

On the way to catch the bus, we called at the chemist to order our next batch of medication for collection on the way home. Jenny's was not on the system so we called at the surgery to reorder it. We were told it would be available on Friday.

We did a bit of Christmas shopping at Boots, called at Tesco for some organic lamb's liver, which they didn't have and a couple of other grocery items.

That was followed by a quick, unfruitful tour of Debenhams.

We bought another Christmas gift at Marks and Spencer before collecting our turkey. Then we found some lamb's liver of the non-organic variety and grudgingly settled for that.

We made it to the bus stop at the East Lancs railway station just in time to catch the 480, which ran through the village, saving us the ten-minute walk home from Longsight Road.

I came straight home with our shopping while Jenny went to the chemist to collect our prescriptions. They were closed for lunch.

After lunch, I went round to the chemist and was given both my and Jenny's medication.

After that, Jenny asked me to vacuum the stair and landing carpet and then I helped Jenny with some food preparation for tomorrow.

I spent a couple of hours working on my new web site problem before our usual Christmas Eve Chinese take-away meal.

Wednesday, 25th December 2019

Christmas Day had arrived.

We opened our presents after breakfast and then I tidied up and helped Jenny in the kitchen, preparing the vegetables for our Christmas Dinner.

Bob and Marie arrived about 2 p.m. and we chatted while dinner was ready and then settled down again in the lounge. Our guests left about 5:30 p.m.

We had a cup of tea and a piece of Dundee cake, which Jenny had made in lieu of a Christmas cake and watched the first of the original ten Startrek movies from the box set Rachel had bought me.

I multi-tasked, watching the film and dealing with the TV recordings at the same time. I was a little annoyed to find that Hauppauge's WinTV8 had not recorded "Call the Midwife" on the laptop. Fortunately it had recorded in Windows Media Centre on the old Dell laptop. I decided to ditch WinTV8 because it was so unreliable and replace it with Next PVR.

I downloaded NextPVR version 5. Installing that was a bit messy and when I finally succeeded in tuning in to a station, it told me that my machine was too slow to use it. I deleted version 5, which was a multi-platform version and settled for version 4. That loaded a treat except that I was up until 2:30 a.m. manually putting the channels in the right order because NextPVR had stored them in the order it found them during the channel scan. I was quite annoyed and sent the developers an E-mail.

I left it with a test recording for the following morning.

Thursday, 26th December 2019

The NextPVR recording was fine.

I decided to check the NextPVR channel list. I exported it to an xml file and then imported that into an Excel spreadsheet. I matched it with the TV.

There were some discrepancies but nothing significant.

I thought I might as well match the list with WinTV8. That went well until near the end when it all went pear-shaped. I returned WinTV8, wondering whether I should have deleted the channel database first. When the scan was complete, I discovered I should have deleted the channel database first. It had only found a handful of stations. What a lousy piece of software it was.

I deleted the channel database and repeated the scan.

It took me most of the day to document the channel lists from the TV, WinTV8, NextPVR and Windows Media Centre and to make sense of them. Apart from a few inconsistencies here and there, they were for all practical purposes, similar enough.

I dealt with my E-mails before washing the juicer for Jenny, my one practical task of the day.

Friday, 27th December 2019

We were back to our usual grocery shopping day, which meant we benefited from 20% off our fish at Waitrose ("Fish Friday").

The motorway was busy, as expected, all the way to the Trafford Centre. Having very few heavy goods vehicles out and about helped. People who insisted on driving in the fast (70 m.p.h.) lane at 60 m.p.h. didn't help.

Apart from that, driving was not too much of a chore and, having called at Unicorn in Chorlton and Sainsbury's store in Sale, we made it to Waitrose in Boroadheath in record time.

We would have had some lunch had there been any gluten-free food around. All we could find was a chocolate and hazelnut bun to accompany our cup of tea.

We had set off late so it was not surprising that we didn't arrive home until about five p.m.

After bringing in the shopping, I returned to putting in the TV recordings for the week, a task I had started in the morning in the odd spare moment or two. I finished up to and including Wednesday, leaving the rest of the week until I could spare some more time.

Saturday, 28th December 2019

Feeling somewhat better, we decided to put in a week end at the old school, dealing with the electrical jumble and they were pleased to see us. The cellar was piled high with electrical items and the people there were wondering what was going to happen. The jumble sale was only a week away.

We made decent progress and it helped that we could leave everything in the room in which we were working. With our intention to return in the morning, there was no necessity to clear up.

I was of the opinion that I, at least, would probably put in a day on Monday as well. The only other day we could make it this week would be Friday, the day before the sale.

Sunday, 29th December 2019

After another day at the old school dealing with the electrical jumble, we paid a visit to an old friend we had not seen for quite a while, June and her daughter Dawn. June had telephoned to say she had a couple of items for our jumble sale and asked if I could collect them. We had a good natter over a cup of tea for Jenny and a glass of water for me, catching up on events before picking up the items and coming home for tea.

Having completed a fair amount of the electrical items the previous day, Graham kindly fetched the rest of the untested electrical jumble up from the cellar. Looking at it all, we were about a third of the way through it and by the end of the day, progress being a little slower than yesterday, we had tested and priced over half of the total amount. I decided to go into the old school again the following day, otherwise it would not all be ready for the sale on Saturday. Also, tomorrow was the day the jumble was being put out in the hall and I wanted to make sure the electrical items were displayed properly.

Monday, 30th December 2019

I worked on the electrical jumble for another full day and there was still a good day's work to do. Hopefully, I would be able to complete that on Friday.

Jenny joined me for the morning, finishing off the items she could test and helping Graham to move the tested and priced items into the hall, where we would be for the sale on Saturday.

I packed up just after 4 p.m. and Graham moved the rest of the unfinished items and my test equipment into the hall.

At home, I was about to settle down for a rest when Jenny informed me that her kitchen scales were not working. We had purchased this expensive item from John Lewis in September 2017 and the on/off switch has ceased to function. Although the John Lewis two-year guarantee had expired, the product came with a fifteen year manufacturer's guarantee.

I contacted Homedics, the company making Salter scales, to let them know I had some faulty scales and expressing some displeasure about such an expensive item not being as robust as one would expect. The scales were obviously not made in Germany.

Tuesday, 31st December 2019

I dealt with the reply from Homedics regarding the scales. The support team had requested a picture of the scales, a copy of the receipt and the batch number. I complied with the request.

I had received a letter about my pending gastroscopy on Saturday. I had tried telephoning the appointment booking number twice on Monday morning to try to make an appointment. The first time, I was ninth in a queue. The second time I was sixth in a queue. I didn't have the time to wait so I gave up.

I tried again this morning and reached a helpful lady who made my appointment for Saturday, 28th January 2020. That was fine with me because I was actually feeling somewhat better and all my stomach pains had gone away, thanks, I thought, to the book Jenny had, listing what foods to avoid and what foods to eat in order to eradicate a stomach ulcer and help repair the stomach lining.

We drove into Ramsbottom for a quick tour of the charity shops and for one or two items.

Two of the five charity shops were closed and the rest had nothing for me. Jenny found a book.

The hardware shop didn't have a sink plunger with a short handle. They were out of stock until the New Year.

The organic shop from which I wanted to purchase a shampoo refill was closed until New Year.

We called at Morrison's small supermarket for some fish for tea. The store had done away with its fish counter and none of what they had in the self-service fridge/freezer was, as far as I could see, sustainably caught. They did have Yellow Tail Rosé at £6 a bottle so we bought two along with a couple of other items.

We went next door to Tesco for a few other items. The Yellow Tail Rosé there was £7 a bottle. They did have Yellow Tail Chardonnay, which Morrison's supermarket did not stock, for £6 a bottle though so we bought two of those as well.

After lunch, I dealt with my E-mails. A chap from Homedics had replied and requested further information, which I supplied.

I also established that the telephone message I had yesterday from a lady on a mobile number saying she was calling from my bank was a scam. I had ignored the call anyway and now intended reporting it to the police.

I brought the accounts up to date and dealt with the TV recordings from yesterday. That could have gone better.

The recordings were on the old Dell XP laptop running Windows 7 using Media Centre. I processed them on the laptop I used in the lounge, editing them with DDR System's VideoRedo TV Suite version 6, which up to this point had proved to be very good. It really struggled with the latest recordings though and I even removed the software and reinstalled it but it made no difference.

One of the files in particular caused the software to hang whatever I did. I even tried converting it from Media Centre format (wtv file) to a DVR-MS file using Windows 7 on the XP laptop but that hung as well.

In the end, I edited it using VideoRedo TV Suite a section at a time (that is the bits I wanted between the advertisements), producing five video (MPEG2) files and the problem then was to string the bits together to produce the recording I wanted.

I tried using the joiner facility in VideoRedo TV Suite but that just hung.

I tried using Nero Video to create a DVD and then exporting the composite file as an MPEG2 movie but I could find a way to do that.

I then decided to reinstall the old VideoRedo Version 3 (the predecessor to the TV Suite) and use the joiner facility in that. That worked a treat, finding only two Input Sequence Errors in the transmission and we watched the resultant programme, which was fine.

I had problems with a second recording. I hit on the idea of using VideoRedo TV Suite to load the WTV file and saving it as an MPEG2 file with no edits. So far, so good. I then used VideoRedo TV Suite to edit the MPEG2 file and that worked fine.

I tried the same process on the original WTV file with which I had problems. Loading the original WTV file and saving it as an MPEG2 file with no edits resulted in 2 Input Sequence Errors, 32,110 Video Resync Frames being removed, 110,663 Audio Resync Frames being removed and 58,938 Audio Resync Frames being added. Remember that this file only produced 2 Input Sequence Errors when I split it into five MPEG2 parts.

I decided to try running a quick stream fix on this same file again (which should effectively do the same as the above). It was taking so long, I left it running while I went to bed – after midnight. I wanted to see what errors this method found in the file.

Whatever was going on with this evening's recordings was a pain in the proverbial.

The climax of this intriguing saga is to be found in next month's diary of events.

And a Happy New Year to all.