

## **Greenmount December 2022**

### **Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

It was another day of cleaning the lounge.

### **Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2022**

We had a full day of shopping.

I called at Scan, just the other side of Bolton, on the way down to Unicorn in Chorlton to buy a six-gang extension socket with a 5 metre lead, each socket being individually switched and with surge and spike protection. That was to replace a 4-gang extension for my laptop and equipment in the lounge. That had a lead that was far too long and I had to physically unplug everything from it when the equipment was not in use.

From Scan, we took the M61 to join the M60. Normally, that junction was exceedingly busy and traffic was often almost at a standstill on both motorways but on this occasion, it was not so bad.

From Unicorn we headed for Waitrose at Broadheath as usual and had a packed, gluten-free lunch in the car before shopping there.

Unfortunately, we were later leaving Waitrose than I had anticipated and about half of the journey on the M60 was at around 10 m.p.h. We also had to deal with school traffic in Bury.

My delivery of catheters had finally arrived, or so I thought. The large box, standing in full view on the drive, by the front door, contained only one box of catheters with five to follow.

I picked up all the apples that had fallen off the crab-apple tree again and then brought the bins that had been emptied earlier back down to the locked gate at the end of the side passage.

### **Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2022**

We were late arriving at the old school for the table-top sale and we did not have a lot of tested and priced items to put out, so our stall was a little sparse. We did manage to sell quite a few table lamps and we also sold one expensive item, which boosted our coffers a little.

We spent the afternoon tidying up the back bedroom and covering the whole of the carpet with decorating cloths. The plan was to bring in the covings from the garage but we ran out of time.

Rachel contacted us to say she was not well and probably would not be coming this weekend. She normally decorated our Christmas tree for us.

### **Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We went into Ramsbottom for a potter round the Civic Hall Christmas stalls. There was a DJ on the stage playing Christmassy songs far too loud and the light display he had was irritating to Jenny's eyes. The stalls were a bit of a disappointment and what Jenny did like was far too expensive so we didn't hang around.

We had a look at a couple of other stalls outside in Ramsbottom and toured the charity shops where I found three more DVDs and Jenny found a book. We also popped into Plentiful to see if they had an gluten-free, vegetable suet. They did and Jenny bought enough to make some mincemeat for more mince pies and a Christmas pudding. We also went to Tesco, primarily for some organic bananas.

Ramsbottom was very busy and the main road had been closed due to a water leak. We had diverted down Kay Brow, which we usually did anyway and found a disabled parking spot, using Jenny's "Blue Badge".

We came home for lunch and I brought the bins back round and disposed of all the rubbish we had sorted and stored in the kitchen.

After lunch, I went into the garage and tidied up enough so that Jenny could help me move the coving off the floor onto the top of the units. I fetched the step-ladders from the back bedroom and positioned them ready to fetch the Christmas stock down from the garage loft tomorrow.

We came in and I gave Jenny some help in the kitchen to prepare another batch of mincemeat and I washed up for her.

We had a rest at about 4:45 p.m. Jenny still had the pizza to make for tea.

### **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We fetched the Christmas items from the garage with the intention of putting up the Christmas tree and decorating it. The process was pleasantly interrupted by a visit from Matthew and Carrie and we chatted for a while. They had brought Jenny a present of a thermal coat, with hood, to keep her warm.

Matt and Carrie couldn't stay long because Matt had some work to do this afternoon and after they left, we had lunch.

We resumed our planned task and finished at around 7 p.m. Fortunately, we had decided to have a salmon salad for tea and Jenny had already cooked the salmon, so there was not a lot of preparation for her to do.

Meanwhile, I grappled with a problem with the electronic TV programme guide on the desktop, which used an application called EPG123 to download the schedules and import

them into Windows Media Centre on a daily basis. The import kept failing and I had to clear out the existing EPG123 configuration and restore it from scratch. That took two attempts, involving a Windows shut down and reload in between.

We had tea while some of this was taking place and I finished it off while trying to watch a couple of recorded TV programmes after tea, popping out of the living room into the conservatory a few times.

After that had completed, I sorted out the TV recordings for the rest of the week, having missed some because I forgot to power on the PC.

I then tried to connect to the desktop, to download the recordings that had completed successfully to my laptop, only to discover my laptop could not connect to the desktop PC yet again.

That took me about 15 minutes to resolve and I still did not understand how I fixed it. Having tried several possible solutions, it suddenly burst into life.

The only problem after obtaining the connection was the very slow data transfer over the wireless network, another intermittent, long-standing problem. I was up until nearly midnight grappling with that one.

I had decided to run an ethernet cable from the wireless extender to the desktop instead of using an ethernet to wireless converter with the desktop. I had a cable long enough but that was currently employed to connect my laptop to the broadband router, for which it was far too long and I needed to replace it with a 5m lead, as soon as I could lay my hands on one.

## **Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

I spent the morning tidying up my assets. There's no law against it, I tell you!

I took the empty Christmas boxes into the garage, out of the way.

I swapped my USB wireless mouse and keyboard on the desktop for a PS/2 wireless mouse and keyboard to free up a USB port.

There were one or two small items lying around and I sorted those into small containers, labelled them, catalogued them so I knew where to find them and slotted them into their resting places, one in my desk cupboard and the rest in the garage cupboards.

The latter process was interrupted by lunch and resumed afterwards.

I started to tidy up the TV programmes we had watched over the last couple of weeks.

## **Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

I dealt with my e-mails, finished off tidying the TV programmes we had watched and backed up my data.

I also managed to reinstate the direct debit for the gas maintenance contract, which was renewed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December and for which the annual payment was due in a week's time.

After lunch, I went out to tie up the blackberry runners that were dangling over the block paving, in front of the garage rear door. I managed to complete the task despite the freezing conditions. There was frost on the lawn even though the sun was shining.

My hands were too cold to tackle the outside lamp at the back. One of the LED bulbs was not lighting and one was flashing when the power was on and there was only light from the third bulb. The sensor also needed adjustment to lengthen the time the light stayed on once activated. It was not a job that could be done wearing gloves and it was far too cold without.

I walked round to the local convenience store for next week's Radio Times and settled down to sort out the programme recording schedule for next week.

### **Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park and Tesco at Prestwich. I dropped off Matthew's chop-saw, which I had borrowed some months ago to cut the lengths of coving for the back bedroom, on the way out. The shopping took a large part of our day.

On returning, I continued with the TV recording schedule.

### **Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

I didn't have much time to continue with the TV recording schedule for next week as we had to be at the Christmas D-CaFF early. I went in my Santa suit. I did not have an opportunity to take any pictures.

I dealt with some e-mails and finished off the TV recording schedule when we came home.

### **Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We had a full and busy day at the old school, sorting, testing and pricing the electrical jumble. We managed to process two of the eight or so large boxes of items I had previously sorted and labelled as requiring attention as well as two used vegetable boxes of new items that had been donated. As strange as it may seem, we ended up with two large boxes of items we had tested and priced and the two used vegetable boxes full of rubbish.

This day had seen our first snow of the winter and I had to clear part of the drive before I could move the car, which didn't take long. To avoid problems when we returned home and for tomorrow, I had sprinkled salted grit on the parts I had cleared

## **Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We dealt with the Christmas cards and prepared them for posting or local hand-delivery as appropriate.

We left for the Christmas meal we had organised at Owen's restaurant at 3:15 p.m. and collected Marie on the way. Bob and our Rachel couldn't make it so it was just Jenny, Marie, Carrie, Matthew and myself at the restaurant.

My and Jenny's meal was disappointing in that the main turkey course was devoid of flavour. It was not a patch on the meal Jenny prepares at home and well below Owen's usual standard.

We had to forfeit the £10 deposit we paid for Rachel and Bob, which, I guess, was only fair since we had pre-booked. On the whole it wasn't worth what we had paid and we would not be booking for next Christmas.

## **Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

I had a delivery of two boxes of size 10 catheters with another 4 boxes to follow, a box lasting me approximately six days. This followed a telephone conversation between the prescribing and ordering team and Jenny on Thursday, while I was driving. They wanted to know how I was doing and asked if I could manage with size 10 catheters instead of size 12, since the latter were difficult to obtain. I told Jenny I could and she relayed the message. The smaller size simply meant that the rate of flow would be slower so emptying my bladder would take longer.

We walked up to the post office at Holcombe Brook to send off the Christmas cards that we could not hand-deliver and we chose to send them first class to ensure they arrived before Christmas. This was the last posting day for second class Christmas mail and there were strikes planned.

We still had a couple of cards to prepare for posting.

After a quick snack, I finished an e-mail thanking the team for my catheter order and we went to Radcliffe crematorium for the service of Marie's sister's husband, Brian. Brian and his wife, Margaret, came to Matthew and Carrie's wedding, Carrie being Margaret's niece.

The service was Roman Catholic, but nowhere near as long as the one for someone else we recently attended. The service was followed by a seated meal of soup, sandwiches and sweet at The Red Hall and a waiter took our order for specially prepared gluten-free sandwiches for which we chose the filling. Water and tea were provided too. We sat with Eric, Brian's older brother.

We were impressed with the service and with the quality of the food, both of which were excellent.

The route we took from the crematorium to The Red Hall was back to Greenmount, past the end of the road leading to our estate and then across the Irwell valley and up

Summerseat lane to Walmersley Road. While going up Summerseat Lane, a single-track road with passing places, I was approaching a blind corner, just past which was a passing place, with my headlights on full beam. A lady driving a 4x4 came round the bend and we stopped bumper to bumper. Had the lady had any sense whatsoever, she would have seen my headlights and pulled into the passing place to allow me to pass her vehicle. Instead, she expected me to reverse back a fair distance to the previous passing place.

I was having nothing of that and switched off my engine waiting for her to move. It wasn't until another vehicle came up behind me that she had no alternative but to reverse. She did so and she made a bit of a hash of that, even though she had less than a vehicle length to go.

I managed to squeeze past her vehicle and continue my journey. I should have taken her number and reported her to my contacts in GMP so they could pass her details on to the traffic officers, since she was obviously not fit to be on the road and posed a danger to other motorists. As it was, I was more concerned with reaching my destination along with the other funeral attendees.

### **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Jenny spent most of her day baking, the priority being four loaves of bread, mostly for me.

My contribution was to plug in and position the electric fire to prove the loaves and to supervise the proving process while tidying up my data discs using the laptop.

### **Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We had a trip out to Ramsbottom, touring the charity shops and calling at Morrisons for a few grocery items.

### **Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We started to give the dining room a good clean as part of our Christmas spruce-up. We succeeded in cleaning about half of it in the time available.

### **Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Grocery shopping south-west of Manchester at Unicorn in Chorlton, Sainsbury's store in Sale and Waitrose in Broadheath took all day. Traffic on the M60 ring-road was extremely heavy, not helped by the strike of railway workers. Whether they had just cause or not I was not well-enough informed to express an opinion one way or the other but one would assume that most people would not give up their earnings unless there were sufficiently aggrieved with their present remuneration and/or adverse working practices, whether current or proposed.

### **Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

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

### **Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We finished cleaning the dining room, during which I managed to tumble from the step-stool yet again. Fortunately, I was not badly injured and managed to perform all sorts of contortions to clean the stainless-steel radiator and underneath the eight-seater, solid-oak dining-table.

### **Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We had a nice lunch with Gwen and Frank at Coasalea, in Walshaw. This was the first time we had been to Cosalea, having heard good reports about it. It was run by the previous owners of the Victoria Hotel in Walshaw so I expected it to be a restaurant along the same lines as Owens in Ramsbottom. In fact it was quite compact and more like a café. The food was good and the staff were attentive but the menu was somewhat limited, particularly when it came to the sweet for those who had a gluten allergy.

Our meal was not rushed and, as a result, we spend a good while there chatting with Gwen and Frank.

The meal was reasonably priced and Jenny and I decided we would go there again.

### **Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We went to the Trafford Centre on public transport, catching the 10:00 a.m. 480 bus from the village down to Bury and, after updating Jenny's travel pass for use on the Metrolink at the Travel Shop for the sum of £10, we boarded a tram bound for Altrincham that was waiting in the station and which departed shortly afterwards.

We changed trams at Cornbrook in Manchester for one bound for the Trafford Centre.

Our first visit was to look for a new Range Cooker in John Lewis but they didn't have anything that appealed to us. I made a list of some makes and a few notes and we headed for Marks and Spencer where I bought some pyjamas to replace some that had worn out. I obviously spent too much time sleeping.

There was nothing we liked in the M&S restaurant and it was very busy. A young lady in the food department went to fetch us a couple of gluten-free, festive sandwiches and we ate those on a bench in the mall.

We walked up to the Nespresso shop to buy some coffee pods for Rachel and then we were going to have a browse round the HMV shop but it wasn't where we thought it was, so we caught the tram back to Deansgate-Castlefield and changed for one to Bury, where we had our longest wait of the day, about 15 minutes, for the 480 bus back to Greenmount.

The bus was packed with young, well-behaved but rather noisy, school-children, most of whom alighted before our stop.

### **Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

Jenny went out for lunch with Sheila and Lynn. I spent the day tidying up my PC.

### **Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022**

We had another day out on the bus to collect our Christmas turkey from Marks and Spencer in Bury. We again caught the 10:00 a.m. 480, which gave us ample time to potter round the shops before our collection time of between 1:30 and 2 p.m.

My visit to the new Go Outdoors shop for a second pair of thermal, showerproof, walking trousers, to keep me warm throughout this cold winter, proved fruitless since they did not have my size in stock.

A visit to Curry's on the opposite side of Bury Centre in search of a new range cooker was a similar waste of time – but good exercise, especially in the cool, misty rain.

We had a look round at DVDs in HMV in Bury before a very nice, gluten-free lunch at Leckenby's Tea Rooms, also in the Millgate shopping centre and I revised my opinion of covered shopping malls on this cold, dismal day.

After that, it was time to collect the turkey, with a brief stop at W. H. Smith for the Christmas edition of the Radio Times on the way back to catch the 480 back to Greenmount.

On returning home, I checked my e-mail and pondered the following documents I had been sent

[Covid-19: Government writes off £10bn on unusable, overpriced, or undelivered PPE | The BMJ](#)

and

[Private Eye Online | Profits Of Doom \(private-eye.co.uk\)](#)

confirming my belief that we are governed by a bunch of crooks.

I spent the rest of the day thumbing through the TV listings for next week for items to record.

### **Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2022**

Jenny had received a message to say she had won the raffle for a Christmas hamper at the Bleakholt animal shelter shop in Ramsbottom and we had arranged to fetch it this morning before going grocery shopping.



We brought the hamper home and made our way to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park, calling at Matthew and Carrie's house on the way to drop off some Christmas presents and have a chat and a drink. Jenny had had her present from Matthew and Carrie early and I was given mine.

We had decided not to go to Tesco, having obtained just about everything we needed at Sainsbury's store and we headed home up the M66. I was going to come up through Bury but there was a long queue at the turn off so I changed my mind and, having checked my offside mirror to verify the coast was clear, I pulled into the next lane to proceed up to the next junction, to come down Bass Lane, through Summerseat.

Unfortunately, I missed a gear as I moved off and so did not pick up speed as fast as I had intended. Some idiot in a van came steaming past me and pulled in front of me in my lane, sounding his horn, as though making a noise would avoid a collision, missing my off-side front by inches. I ignored the situation and carried on as he sped off into the distance.

Going down to Summerseat on the single-track road with passing places, was almost always an entertaining challenge, watching the majority of other, impatient drivers make a pigs ear of it. The wait in the queue to go down was not a long one, although I did have a vehicle on my rear end, the driver of which seemed to think I was not going fast enough in the 20 m.p.h. restricted area, not that one could go even that fast for most of the twisty route with blind corners, in case something was coming the other way and one or the other had to pull into a passing place.

Safely home, thank goodness, we emptied the car and I spent my evening finishing off the TV listings

### **Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

I didn't feel well when I woke up. I ached all over and felt very cold. Breakfast followed by a warm shower helped although I didn't have the energy to do a great deal so I dealt with more administrative tasks, mostly from my lounge armchair.

### **Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

First and foremost, here is our Christmas Message to all.

It's that time of year again and we're looking forward to a Merry Cathetermass and a Hapless New Year as nurses strike, temperatures plummet and fuel prices soar.

Although still in the early stages of development, the Government's present to the masses is its new time machine. Unfortunately, it only goes backwards.

Experiments over the past three years this Government had been in office had successfully regressed the British society by about 150 years. Future experiments were planned over the Government's remaining two years of rule that should improve the effectiveness of the time-machine, with us all wearing animal skins and living in caves.

As a precautionary measure, Westminster was encased in a present-day time-bubble in order to retain control of the device and those who had amassed great wealth were protected by a cash-flow field, emanating from the time-machine. Reversal of the field polarity to remove this level of protection would require a considerable amount of Labour.

There was a theory that suggested such a measure would also reduce and even counter the effect of the time machine. It may even induce it to move our society forwards, into the future.

Time would tell.

As for our day, Rachel, Jenny and I opened our presents after breakfast and the usual, routine, morning jobs.

I helped Jenny with some of the preparation for our Christmas meal and after we had eaten, we played a game of Agatha Christie Bingo, one of the presents from Rachel. It was something new and unusual and quite entertaining, with some facts about Agatha Christie and her novels of which I was not aware.

Mike Nottage in New Zealand telephoned briefly during the afternoon to wish us a Merry Christmas and I reciprocated but unfortunately, it was in the middle of our meal and I could not talk to him for more than a few minutes. He said he would call back later but he didn't manage to do so.

I had managed to squeeze in another look at my web site and the implementation of version 4 using neater HTML coding. I decided I needed a link cross reference for my version 3 code and started to look at an excel VBA macro to produce one. I didn't get very far. The font size in the macro window in Excel 365 was stuck at 8 point and was too small to read on my high resolution screen. I tried changing it but it wouldn't budge. The page itself did not scale properly either. I tried reporting the problem to Microsoft but the feedback pane did not connect to the Microsoft service. What a shambles.

### **Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

After the usual routine jobs, I dealt with my e-mail and had another look at the excel problem, this time successfully telling Microsoft what I thought of Office 365 and the Excel problem in particular.

I reverted to using the GVC Windows 10 laptop with an older version of Office and spent the rest of the day starting to code a VBA macro to produce a cross reference of the links built into my website.

### **Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

It was another cold, wet, dull day so we gave the Village Christmas walk a miss.

I decided to have a look at the Meaco dehumidifier we had brought home from the old school and which did not work. I managed to free the top but I didn't want to disturb the wires to the control panel so I did not remove it completely.

I removed the screws that kept the back in place but it wouldn't budge so I gave up and put it all back together.

The dehumidifier was not collecting any water so even if I had dismantled it, I doubt I could have repaired it since the problem was probably with the compressor and replacing that was a job for a refrigeration engineer with all the facilities for dealing with the coolant. Besides. It would be expensive and probably not worth the trouble.

I looked for a new one again. They were still not in stock anywhere. I sent a message to Meaco asking for a maintenance manual but I doubted they would send me one.

I started going through the second week of TV programmes listed in the Christmas double-edition of the Radio Times, looking for programmes worth watching and, thus, recording.

I listened to the Christmas edition of Jazz Record Requests, most of which was, as usual, a load of rubbish. There was one nice recording of Silent Night, led by a saxophone, not my favourite instrument by far, but on this occasion, the player gave a nice rendering of the tune.

I decided to have a new look at implementing version 4 of my web site gradually. There was quite a few differences between version 3 and version 4 and I needed to make sure that pages upgraded to version 4 could co-exist with the remaining version 3 pages.

To be sure of this, I needed to finish the coding to produce the cross reference of links between pages.

### **Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

I finished off the list of programmes to record from next week's Radio Times schedules, leaving just the electronic scan through the schedules after they had been updated on Friday morning to make sure I had not missed any episodes of series we watched.

I updated my web site and resumed work on my VBA web site cross reference project, making significant progress and, by the end of the day, I had a list of the full file-names of all the pages.

The next step was to look through all the pages for link references and tabulate those. A job for another day, I thought.

### **Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We had a potter round Ramsbottom, calling at the charity shops as usual, except for one that wasn't open. Jenny bought a couple of items.

Jenny called at the card shop but couldn't find what she wanted. She also bought herself some more socks from Velvet and a few grocery items from Plentiful.

I came home empty-handed!

After lunch, there was more administrative work to do, dealing with e-mails and updating the accounts.

I put out the general waste bin for collection tomorrow and emptied all the fruit and veg waste into the compost bin.

I thought I was attending a Civic Society this evening but when I telephoned Christine to ask her about the meeting she said they had decided at the last meeting in November, which I did not attend, not to have one in December, so I now had a free evening.

### **Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

We decided not to journey down to south Manchester this week for our grocery shopping, once again taking advantage of our nearest Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park and the large Tesco store at Prestwich.

Even so, the shopping took a large portion of our day, the rest of Jenny's day being to put it all away and make our evening meal while I finished off the TV recordings for next week and scheduled them.

### **Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

Most of our last day of the year was spent at the old school, working on the electrical jumble and trying to prepare as much as possible for sale in time for the table-top sale next Saturday.

We stayed up for the midnight celebrations, watching Jools Holland and then switching over to watch the impressive fireworks display in London. While that was very nice to see, I couldn't help thinking of the cost and how much better that money could have been spent on those who needed it.

We passed the time by playing games Rachel had bought us for Christmas, which was most entertaining. This was the second time we had played them and having become more familiar with the rules of one of the games in particular made it more enjoyable.

I shall finish this year's diary entry by wishing all my readers around this time a Happy New Year for 2023. Only one more year to go before we could start looking forward to a government that cared about the people of this country., the environment and especially about the future today's grandchildren would face.