

Greenmount – February 2018

Thursday, 1st February

There was more tidying of the conservatory until lunchtime, after which I had a meeting at Tottington Library with Christine McManus to discuss the IT needs of the library under management of the local community after Bury Council closed it.

The meeting went reasonably well and I came home and documented the situation, primarily for my benefit to get my mind round what was there and what was required.

Crucially, I needed to speak with a couple of prospective suppliers about quotes they had submitted, I needed to speak with the Bury Council IT support team about the Cisco equipment they had left in the building and which the new occupiers would need to use and I needed to resurrect my knowledge of Cisco IOS so I could configure the equipment if I needed to do so. Having a hard copy of the existing configurations would help, for which I needed the access information from the old support team.

After tea, I went to the village meeting and the highlight of this one was a talk from our new member of parliament, James Frith (Lab). I did not necessarily agree with all his views but I did form the impression that he had his constituents' interests at heart and you can't say fairer than that.

Friday, 2nd February

The usual shopping excursion was as uneventful as ever. The chemist in Prestwich (Dennis Gore), our first port of call, did have my Saw Palmetto tucked away in a bag under the counter – except it was the wrong brand. It was produced by some company of which I had never heard. Fortunately, there was a stock of Vogel on the shelf and I purchased two bottles, the plan being to telephone the shop when I started the second bottle to ensure I could obtain another bottle of the correct brand before I ran out. The lady who served me, Shelia, gave me a discount for all the delay and confusion in respect of my purchase.

Unicorn was surprisingly busy for around lunchtime and we had to queue for a short while for a space in the car park, as we had done on occasion before. Jenny started shopping while I waited for a parking spot, as she normally did on such occasions and it wasn't long before I joined her in the shop.

We were away from Waitrose in Broadheath by 2:30 p.m., which was earlier than I expected, having arrived as lunchtime in the café was coming to an end, had our lunch and methodically been along every aisle, as usual.

The M60 on the return journey was surprisingly easy going – until we reached the approach to the canal bridge and the crawl from there to just past the M62 junction was painful but at least we kept moving, for most of the time, even if it was between 5 and 10 m.p.h. After that we were back up to the temporary, average 50 m.p.h. speed limit until we had just passed our

alternative route home, the M61 junction. We were then back to a painful crawl to our junction at Prestwich.

Having used the scenic route to Unicorn, avoiding the M60, Jenny remarked she thought that was quicker than the motorway. I pointed out that no routes are quick from the start of the school run, around 3 p.m., to around 7 p.m., especially on a Friday evening, with people driving to fetch their children, people driving home from work, people driving home who work away for the week and people going out for the evening. With that amount of traffic, I guess we should be grateful we were not all still riding horses.

In the evening, I scheduled the TV recording for the coming week, as usual. That task was somewhat more complicated by the unpredictability of Windows Media Centre's TV schedule updates, which, for the present, seemed not to be working. Fortunately, Media Centre seemed to be able to update its guide using in-band information (i.e. when tuned into a channel).

Saturday, 3rd February

We spent the morning at the Old School drop-in, working on electrical jumble and selling the odd item.

I spent the afternoon working on updates to the village web site.

Sunday, 4th February

In one of those rare (these days) fits of frenzy, I went out and washed the car. The forecast was for a day of cloud, although it started off quite sunny and I thought it might turn out to be a better day than expected. How wrong can one be? There was no mention on the forecast of the hail showers that came down as I was wiping down the car after its final rinse.

I packed up, put the car on the drive under the car port to dry off as best it could and came in for some lunch. Needless to say, as I came in the sun came out.

I had earlier helped Jenny to put the dining room window vertical blinds in the washing machine and having removed them and let them drain, she needed some help to hang them out to dry, which we did before lunch.

After lunch, I dealt with the TV recordings from the previous evening, sent in a request to the Microsoft Technical web site about Media Centre and, later in the afternoon, helped Jenny hang the vertical blinds in the conservatory as the sun started to disappear and it started to turn colder outside. We expected another frost tonight and both snow and ice the following night and early Tuesday morning, with yellow weather warnings in place on the forecast.

I finished off my day by dealing with the remaining car booty items in the conservatory that needed attention. I didn't really make a lot of progress because they all needed bits and

pieces I did not have to hand.

Monday, 5th February

I spent a good couple of hours working on the Tottington Library IT project. I spoke with Mike Forbes from Comshak who had put in a quotation for the PCs. He was driving so rather than distract him, I agreed to talk to him on Wednesday when he was back home. I also spoke with Colin from Computech Services who had put in a quote for a firewall and a server. After speaking with Colin, I checked on the firewall and it looked fine. I was also happy with the server we discussed. What I was unsure about was why the volunteers, who had taken on the library after Bury Council closed it, had requested a quote for a server.

I downloaded the brochures for the Cisco router and switch. Colin told me the Council had been persuaded to leave these items and had set the configuration to default, although the router was working on the broadband connection.

Unfortunately, my Cisco IOS knowledge was not just rusty; it had crumbled to dust! I was also wondering how I would access the command port on the back of the equipment from the village laptop, having no serial port on it.

After that, I pottered round dealing with the equipment in the conservatory that needed attention, without much success again and dealt with some administration work, including paying the first annual fee to The Friends of Huntfold for the maintenance of the green areas on the estate after Bury Council agreed to lease the land to us rather than sell it with the prospect of further building even though the land was currently designated as recreational.

The moves by the Council to divest itself of the land to avoid maintenance costs and of the library to avoid running costs were due to a shortage of income as a result of central government placing a cap on Councils' freedom to raise local taxes and this had reached the stage where Bury Council was struggling to provide essential services – and it was not alone.

There was no doubt that the Council was not being run as efficiently as it could be and it would have done no harm to reduce the very high salaries of the higher paid employees but matters had reached such a state that we were in danger of regressing to Victorian times. The time had come to take steps to redistribute the wealth of this country more evenly and to ensure that everyone had the benefit of the services they needed and the quality of life they deserved instead of reserving such just for those who had far more than enough money to pay for it.

Tuesday, 6th February

After downloading the configuration guides for the Cisco equipment at Tottington Library and finding a USB to serial cable with drivers to provide asynchronous terminal access to the Cisco command port on Amazon, I donned another couple layers of clothing, my woolly hat and thermal gloves and went into the cold garage to do a little tidying.

I spent the rest of the day cutting up wood for the fire, working at the garage entrance, behind the car. Had it been a nice day, I would have given myself more room under the car port, putting the car on the road. Since it was snowing, I managed in the cramped conditions.

Wednesday, 7th February

We took our rubbish and some from the Old School to the tip in Bury and then went to B&Q for a new length of trunking to cover the central heating pipes in the dining room.

I had cut the initial trunking with the intention of it fitting between the ceiling coving and the new skirting. Unfortunately, Richard had not concealed the piping below the plaster surface high enough to allow the skirting to cover it. The end result was that a piece had to be cut out of the skirting to accommodate the trunking to hide the pipes and since this meant the trunking needed to be longer than anticipated, the piece that was fitted was too short.

The existing trunking would probably be needed when we decorated the lounge.

In the afternoon, Jenny went for a walk with Gwen. I tidied up my media on the laptop.

Thursday, 8th February

I pottered round in the morning, preparing for my second visit to Tottington Library.

I went to Tottington Library after lunch with the intention of connecting the Cisco switch to the Cisco broadband router. I didn't get very far. The first two network ports of the router were connected to the two wireless receivers, one on the ground floor and one on the first floor. The remaining two ports were not passing IP traffic to my laptop so there was no way connecting the switch would work.

I needed to access the router configuration. For that I needed a USB to serial cable to connect to the console port on the back and I needed to refresh my IOS knowledge using my old Cisco 800 router – if I could find it.

Friday, 9th February

We had to be at the D-CaFF dementia café early because it was a special one, being a celebration of St. Valentine's Day, with a hot-pot meal followed by apple crumble. Jenny had made the hot pot for the gluten-free visitors and all the apple crumble for everyone.

When we arrived, Joani was the only one there and we were struggling with switching on the heating, which Joani managed to do by randomly pressing buttons on the controls. Then we grappled with lighting the oven. Fortunately, Bill Elkin arrived, told us the oven had been repaired and lit it very easily. I took my head out of the oven first.

The day went well with 84 attendees, not including our special guests, James Frith M.P. and the Shadow Minister for Mental Health and Social Care, Barbara Keeley.

Afterwards, we sped off to Tesco at Prestwich for some groceries for the week. It was a good job we had stocked up the previous week. Tesco didn't have a lot of organic items and the store had no organic meat for roasting.

Saturday, 10th February

We spent the day at the Old School, dealing with the electrical jumble for the sale on 19th February.

At home, I caught up with the day's broadcast of Jazz Record Requests.

Sunday, 11th February

My first productive act of the day was to go out with Jenny, between the hail showers, to deliver the Jumble Sale notices to village residents on our allocated round.

My second was to light the fire, for which I chopped some extra logs. As it turned out, we had enough wood ready to burn for the evening.

I finished off my day with a sizeable update to the village web site.

Monday, 12th February

We did not rise from our slumbers early and after a shower, breakfast and the usual morning chores, it was approaching noon.

I updated and checked the accounts and then had a long chat with my sister, Barbara on the telephone before breaking off to keep an appointment with Faith Greenhalgh to look into a printer problem she had at home.

The previous evening's and overnight snow was melting and it was a nice day with plenty of sunshine so I decided to walk up to Faith and John's house and made good time despite the slippery conditions underfoot.

My guess was that the fault was due to an issue with the drivers. Faith told me that the Windows 10 PC had recently performed an update and whether this had given rise to the problem was unclear. I decided to uninstall the printer and download the HP drivers anew.

The reinstallation took about two hours and was successful.

I made my way home at a steadier pace since the journey was all downhill and there was a

greater probability of slipping.

I was briefly back at the keyboard of our own laptop, sipping a cup of tea, before it was time to light the fire.

Tuesday, 13th February

I was up before 8 a.m. to put out the bins for emptying.

The morning Dementia Awareness session at the Skipton Building Society in Bury had been cancelled due to the lack of attendees and the wet, wintery conditions had scuppered Plan B, which was a morning at the Incredible Edible plot.

We did some more sorting and tidying after the major disruption in the dining room and I put away some items in the garage that had been sitting on the end of Jenny's kitchen worktop for some time. I took the opportunity to chop some wood for the fire using the logs I had cut up the previous week.

After lunch, I prepared the fire for lighting, urged on by the cat. Once the fire was lit, I settled down to continue the work on redesigning my web site.

Wednesday, 14th February

I spent the morning searching for a stainless steel bird feeding station to put outside in the back garden. My experience was that good-quality stainless steel was the only material suitable for all-weather use. Not finding one on Google, I eventually resorted to Google Germany, since German manufacturing seemed to be the best in the world after our own stainless steel industry self-destructed, like all our other manufacturing, in the 1970s, the UK pursuing the nefarious path in the business of finance instead.

I found a rather nice item for around 90 Euros on the German Amazon web site. I didn't expect it to be cheap. Then I found the same item on the English Amazon web site, the cost working out at almost £10 more expensive, which only goes to show how much consumers in the UK were ripped off as opposed to our European counterparts.

The item was not exactly what I wanted so I decided to see what the cost would be of having one custom made and I found details of a local stainless steel factors, to which I intended to pay a visit.

For the rest of the day, I helped Jenny clean the bathroom ceiling, tiles and the grout between the tiles. That was long overdue and took so much time that we had some tiles and grout still to do. The only bit that did not come clean was the silicone sealant and that would have to be replaced at some convenient point. The grout also needed some filling in places.

Thursday, 15th February

A Jumble sale was scheduled for the coming week-end so we decided it would be better to do our usual weekly grocery shop today.

I called first at Ramsbottom Glass to see if they would repair my conservatory roof. They were not interested. The job was not big enough for them. I decided they wouldn't be getting any more of my business, having used them in the past.

A chap there did give me a contact elsewhere.

We picked up the M66 at its Ramsbottom junction to make our way on the motorway (M60) to Unicorn, making good time and subsequently to Waitrose, where we had lunch.

The café at Waitrose in Broadheath was not having a good day. The soup was off due to a fault, the coffee machine was not working (which didn't affect us) and all the available teapots were allocated, the café being very busy.

The journey home was not bad, joining slow-moving traffic as we approached the canal bridge until past the M62 junction and as we approached our exit at Junction 17. For there, travelling up the A56 through Bury was busy, although we made reasonable time and we veered off to come home through Tootington, calling at Bargain Booze for some wine.

Safely home, I was not feeling well. I had not slept well the previous night, waking with a sore throat, catarrh, blood from my nose and a pain in the right-hand side of my upper chest. The latter had persisted for most of the day. Interestingly, a large whisky helped considerably and the couple of glasses of wine with our fish tea made me feel a lot better, although the catarrh lingered in the background.

I put all this down to lifting heavy boxes in the Old School cellar the previous week end and stretching to reach the far reaches of the bathroom the previous day.

While Jenny prepared tea, I worked on the installation and configuration of a piece of software called EPG Collector to overcome the unpredictability of Windows Media Centre to acquire up-to-date TV guide information.

Downloading the Zip installation file was a waste of time and I deleted that and started again, downloading the Windows installer (MSI) file.

I followed the guidelines in the web site <https://digiex.net/threads/windows-media-center-tv-guide-data-fix-wmc-ota-epg.15262/> and ran the program to obtain the guide data. Needless to say it didn't work. The damn thing failed to communicate with my Hauppauge USB Freeview tuner and I couldn't find out why.

I decided to log an incident on the software's web page, except that it wouldn't let me. I gave up.

Friday, 16th February

We had a late-morning visit from Donald and Anne, our two friendly Jehovah Witnesses and spent a good, enjoyable hour chatting. Unusually, the subject of religion did not arise.

We spent the afternoon at the Old School working on the electrical jumble. We could not set up our display tables in the hall, our new location for electrical goods established at the previous jumble sale, because the Beavers were due in the hall in the early evening. We left two tables in the corner of the hall with our boxes of items we had priced and tested, hidden behind two large, mobile display boards and left for the evening around 4 p.m.

On our way home we called to drop off a birthday card for Joani Beale, who runs the D-CaFF dementia café and she invited us in for a glass of wine and a chat.

We came home for tea which Jenny had left preparing in the slow cooker.

Saturday, 17th February

It was a long and tiring day at the Old School working on the electrical jumble.

Sunday, 18th February

After another even longer and even harder day at the Old School, I managed an update to the village web site before tea.

Monday, 19th February

It was another long and tiring day, not only testing and pricing electrical equipment for the jumble but also preparing for the sale at 4 p.m., selling and tidying away afterwards, at 6 p.m.

While at the sale, I had a telephone call from my sister Barbara to say she was in hospital. I said I would call her back later in the evening, which I did.

Tuesday, 20th February

I spent the morning sorting out a few outstanding issues.

The first item was my printer ink order from Inkmasters. The company could not source the BCI6-PM photo-magenta cartridge. I managed to find the latter on Amazon and I ordered it from there. In placing my Amazon order I unintentionally and accidentally signed up to the free trial of Amazon Prime. I detected that when my order, which qualified for free delivery but was below the required £20 order value for it, did not accrue a delivery charge. On checking my account, I discovered I had enrolled for Amazon Prime without any

recollection of so doing and no idea how that had occurred. I immediately cancelled the trial, otherwise I would have incurred ongoing, monthly charges on my credit card. I then sent a formal complaint to Amazon.

I contacted Inkmastrers to ask for my order to be shipped without the cartridge they could not source.

The second item was to contact a handyman who had been recommended to me about repairing my conservatory roof. He had been ill and was not currently at work so he had a backlog of jobs. He said he would try to call in to see me about the work within the next three to four weeks and that, if I had not heard from him by then, to contact him again.

The third item was to order the cat's medication from the vet for collection on Friday.

The fourth was to follow up an enquiry about accommodation in Bridlington I had made a couple of weeks earlier and to which I had not received a reply. That was not resolved.

In the afternoon, I performed a task for Rachel to help with the repair of her handbag.

I checked a hi-fi system that had been returned to the Old School Jumble sale, having been purchased at the last one, because it did not work properly. I was sure I had tested it before it was sold and it worked. This afternoon, I soak-tested it (i.e. left it working for a couple of hours). It played a CD all the way through without a problem. The FM stereo radio and the AM bands worked well. It played all the music tracks on a USB memory stick. When it came to playing a record, I discovered there was no stylus needle. That was odd if I tested it before.

I removed the complete stylus head, established the device had been imported by Clas Ohlson, found the company's web site, identified the stylus head and chatted online with a very helpful lady who pointed me to the item I needed to order to replace the stylus head and needle. I placed the order. My plan was to repair it and sell it either at the next jumble sale or on our car boot sale and recover my costs from the proceeds, giving the rest to the Old School. I let Christine, the Old School manager, know what I was doing and she said it was fine.

Wednesday, 21st February

We walked down the Kirklees Trail (Cycle Route 6) to Bury and lunched at Leckenby's Tea Rooms in the Millgate shopping precinct. We both had salads and I was pleased to see they did not contain any of the horrible, tasteless, iceberg lettuce. The salads were very nice. Jenny's first choice of prawns was only gluten-free if she did not have the marie-rose sauce, although why that should contain any gluten was beyond us. Jenny decided the prawns would be too dry without the sauce so she had the salmon instead.

When her salad arrived, it had mayonnaise on it. Jenny queried whether that was gluten-free. It wasn't and a fresh salad was prepared for her.

My salad of tuna with mayo was fine.

When we paid, I mentioned the gluten-free incident and it appeared that the waitress who served us was new, only having been there a week and obviously still had a lot to learn.

I did not make any great fuss, although the issue remained that, had a meal containing gluten been served to a celiac who was not aware of the gluten content, the outcome could have resulted in a fatality and cafés and restaurants needed to take gluten intolerance far more seriously. They also needed to consider that anyone can eat food that is gluten-free, so adopting a gluten-free environment would harm no-one.

My ink for the printer arrived and I was able to do some long-awaited printing.

Thursday, 22nd February

I spent much of the morning looking at accommodation in Bridlington again, reaching no real decision.

I decided to turn my attention to the small holes in the dining room walls where the radiator pipes popped out and I decided to fill them in. It was not a large task but it was fiddly. My intention was to sand them down when they had set and then touch them up as necessary before painting.

The stylus for the turntable arrived and I fitted it, testing the record deck by playing the whole side of an LP. That worked fine and the hi-fi was ready for the market.

Friday, 23rd February

It was grocery shopping day again.

On the way out, I called at the library in Tottington to drop off an HP laser printer that had come into the jumble sale at Greenmount. It was working but it needed a new cartridge. The volunteers who were now running the library, which Bury Council had closed as a cost-saving measure, were grateful for the donation.

We went to the vet's practice in Bury for the cat's monthly supply of medication and then headed for the M66 junction. On the way, the car seemed to be catching the ground occasionally, something I thought I had detected over the past few outings and rather than risk tearing down the motorway, I performed a u-turn and made for Finney's garage where it was serviced in January.

The chaps at the garage had a look at the car straight away and discovered that some of the clips that held the cover under the engine in place had come loose. Apparently, this was common when the cover was removed for servicing and then replaced and the faulty clips needed replacing. That cost me nothing and delayed us for about 45 minutes. I was glad we had called in.

We headed up to Asda at Pilsworth before finally joining the motorway network, having a trouble-free journey to Unicorn and subsequently on to Waitrose, where we lunched as usual.

The journey back was horrendous. We hit a long queue of traffic as we rejoined the A56 to travel back to the motorway and the heavy traffic persisted for a couple of major, traffic-light controlled junctions, after which it seemed to dissipate into thin air and the rest of the route to the motorway was trouble-free.

That didn't last long. As soon as we were on the motorway, having accelerated up to the temporary speed limit of 50 m.p.h., we had to slow down and, after a mile or two of start-stop antics, I managed to keep the car moving at between 5 and 10 miles per hour until we had passed the M62 junction, when we were back up to 50 m.p.h. again with no sign of any problem that would slow down the traffic.

We kept that up almost to our exit at Prestwich and immediately joined two lanes of queuing traffic heading towards Whitefield. This time, we passed that cause of the problem – a vehicle rather badly damaged and immobile in the nearside lane following what we assumed was a collision. There was no sign of the other vehicle with which it collided.

After that, it was heavy traffic all the way into and through Bury.

We took the scenic route home, up through Tottington, calling at Bargain Booze for our weekly supply of wine, arriving home at about 4:50 p.m, having left Waitrose at 3:40 p.m. Normally, I would expect the journey to take about 45 minutes.

We had travelled at a busy time and much later than usual. I was thankful it was half-term. Having to cope with all the traffic and a school run would have been even worse.

The work on the M60 motorway ring road round Manchester to upgrade it to add another lane (using the hard shoulder) and to install “smart” signals was still progressing slowly, the practical outcome being to turn a three lane car park into a four lane car park for much of its route.

Saturday, 24th February

What a terrible day. Not weather-wise; it was a beautiful sunny day with a nice blue sky outside. Inside, I was besieged by gremlins.

First, I accidentally overwrote my spreadsheet list of video recordings I had scheduled for the coming week during the previous evening. It took me a good couple of hours to reconstruct the list using a back-up copy I had on my desk-top computer that was several days old.

Next, I had trouble accessing my bank account online and had to go through a password reset procedure, which took a while.

Then my desktop computer crashed. I reloaded it and put in the TV recordings for the week on that system. Then I checked that the first one had started on schedule at noon, I found it had not. I switched the recording to the laptop with seconds to spare and then went to investigate the problem with the desktop. It had lost the recording.

After some fiddling, it crashed. I eventually reloaded it and it seemed fine. I scheduled a recording for later in the afternoon.

Being satisfied that everything was working as it should, we sped off to the garden centre for some organic compost. It had been our intention to work outside on various potted plants but time was moving on and it was lunchtime by the time we returned and turning very cold by the time we had finished lunch so we decided to leave the pots until the following day.

After lunch I settled down to do a little more work on the laptop when I heard a noise from my desktop. It had crashed again – just as it had started the TV recording I had scheduled. I reloaded it and restarted the recording manually, some six minutes into the programme. I was not best pleased.

Windows 7, of course, quite helpfully said it was searching for a repair for the problem that had caused it to crash. It was working fine until the last couple of Microsoft updates.

Sunday, 25th February

I started the morning by replacing two halogen bulbs that had not been working for a few weeks. One was in the kitchen and one in the garage.

I measured the size of the charcoal filters in the cooker hood so we could replace them.

I removed the polythene I had put over the small hole in the conservatory roof because it kept becoming dislodged and when it did not cover the hole, no wafer had penetrated, so it did not seem to be needed.

We spent the rest of the morning dealing with the plants from the conservatory, tidying them and re-potting them as necessary and I cleaned the cat's latrine.

After lunch, I started to clean the conservatory, commencing with the ceiling at the centre of the bay and working down towards the windows. I cleaned all the top half of the bay, including the polycarbonate panels in the roof and the wooden, sliding blinds that cover them before it was time to finish at 5 p.m.

Monday, 26th February

I continued where I left off the previous day, cleaning the uPVC windows and the glass in the conservatory bay, finishing about 4 p.m. I decided to leave the floor of the bay section until the following day since it was getting late in the afternoon.

I thought I would take a quick look at the record deck of a large JVC hi-fi system that had come into the jumble at the Old School. The deck didn't work and I suspected the 12 volt power supply to it that came from the back of the hi-fi.

I took off the hi-fi cover and discovered that it was impossible to access the connections to the 12 volt socket at the back without removing the back plate. That was not so difficult and with access to the connections to the socket on the circuit board I was able to check the voltage, carefully, with the unit powered on. It was 12 volts so the problem was with the record deck and not the hi-fi.

Putting the back plate back on proved more difficult than removing it. I eventually managed it and then replaced the cover.

Following a quick check to make sure the hi-fi was still working, I commenced my examination of the record deck, removing the base to access the mechanism. I quickly established that, for some reason, the arm was not properly activating the micro-switch that supplied power to the motor. After fiddling about underneath, removing the turntable, more fiddling about with the mechanism underneath and refitting the turntable, I discovered that the whole thing was working again. I didn't know what exactly I had done or why it had not worked before but it was working now.

I played an LP through to the end and it was fine. I also established that the arm had correctly re-seated itself and that, when lifted to play another record, the turntable operated again. I was satisfied it was working, although I would like to have known what the problem actually was and how I had fixed it. I was concerned that the fix may only be temporary.

I packed it all away for return to the Old School, confident in the knowledge that Frank would give it a good soak testing at the coming Antiques and Collector's Fair at Easter when he would be playing and selling LPs.

I finally finished my working day at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, 27th February

I was up early for a change, to put out the general waste bin for collection, Jenny having put out the bin containing food and garden waste the previous day.

After breakfast and the usual morning chores, we cooked up the Seville oranges Jenny had prepared the previous day and made just over six jars of marmalade.

That took us to almost lunchtime.

After lunch, I started to look at migrating Rachel's data from her old Windows XP laptop to her new Windows 10 laptop.

Chris, the handyman, telephoned saying he would like to call in and look at the conservatory

problem. After a brief look at the work involved, he decided he did not have the equipment to reach the damaged part of the roof.

I resumed the cleaning of the inside of the conservatory, after replacing the roller blind cord connector that broke the previous day. Today it was the floor's turn and the bay received a good scrubbing. After that, I rearranged the furniture so I had access to the middle part with the intention of cleaning the uPVC and window glass the following day.

I resumed work on Rachel's computer. Having transferred all her data, I looked for a solution to Windows Media Player in Windows 10 not playing MPEG 2 videos because it was lacking the codec. Would you believe that I found the required codec in the [Microsoft UK Store](#) and it was FREE!!! That downloaded, installed and worked fine. Had Microsoft turned over a new leaf? I might have started to think so if they had made Media Centre freely available in Windows 10 as well.

The next important step was to acquire a USB CD/DVD device and my searching led me to the [Lite-on EBAU108](#) since the new, thin machine did not come with an optical drive.

Wednesday, 28th February

I continued with the work on Rachel's new laptop to set up her E-mail. I had already done this using the Office 365 trial software but that licence had expired and it was my intention to purchase a five-user licence to cover Jenny's laptop, which I used extensively, my desktop, which I used when the weather was not too cold to go into the conservatory, the Lenovo laptop that came into the Jumble and which I used for testing equipment for the jumble and for village projects and Rachel's new laptop, at about £80 for twelve months. The high cost and the prospect of this increasing year on year made me rethink my strategy.

I thought about installing a copy of Office 2007. The problem was that it had come on an optical disc and I had no reader on the machine. Then I remembered that I had made an ISO back up copy of the disc and I had stored that on a portable USB drive. What was more, I discovered I could mount ISO disc images in Windows 10.

I installed a copy of the software on the laptop from the USB drive and configured her E-mail for a second time. I also imported all her old mail into her personal folders simply by copying the PST back up file to the default PST file for Outlook 2007.

The next snag was that the facility to export Word documents to PDF was not enabled in Office 2007 and following the link to the Microsoft web site to install the add-on brought up a statement that Office 2007 had been retired. It did give me the link to install Office 365. It was a while before I realised, by scrolling down the page, that the link to install the add-on I wanted was there.

Installing the add-on also gave me the opportunity to install Office 2007 SP3, which I did.

I reflected on a decent day's work and a considerable saving.

Finalising the accounts for the month showed a slight growth in assets even after paying for the labour for the new dining room flooring and a few other bits and pieces, so I was quite pleased.

The prospect for the coming months was not quite so rosy, with some hefty bills to come in March and an increase in my energy costs.