

Greenmount February 2022

Tuesday, 1st February 2022

The major task of the day was to make the Seville orange marmalade. Having soaked the chopped oranges, with pips removed and having placed them in a muslin bag, overnight, it was necessary to boil them for about forty-five minutes to soften the peel. The recipe said one and a half hours but the oranges were too finely chopped for that, having used the food mixer.

At this point, we should have also added the juice of a large lemon but I didn't read the whole of the recipe. We stirred in less than the minimum, recommended amount of sugar, tasting the mixture to make sure it had the desired balance between the bitter orange taste and the sweetness of the sugar for me, since I was going to consume most of it. The recipe said it would need twenty minutes to reach the setting point. It lied, or rather, it might have been closer to the mark had we added the lemon juice.

After about forty minutes of boiling and testing, we decided to add the lemon juice and a further twenty minutes boiling seemed to indicate it was ready for bottling. Time would tell if we were right. We produced thirteen jars and there was a bit over in a dish for sampling once it set, if it set.

Since crawling about in the garage loft, which was somewhat cramped, I had been having some lower abdominal pain and it was becoming quite severe. Sitting with a hot water bottle held to the affected area while watching the evening's selection of recorded TV programmes seemed to help and I took a refreshed bottle to bed with me.

Wednesday, 2nd February 2022

We were up somewhat earlier than usual and I was feeling much better until I started moving around after breakfast, when I had a little more discomfort and a bloated feeling.

Nonetheless, we braved the miserable weather for a brief jaunt into Ramsbottom.

We came home for lunch but we only had time for a brief snack. Someone from the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital and asked Jenny if she could go for her post operative procedure tomorrow, since they had a cancellation. She said she could. She was then asked if she could come to the MRI before 4 p.m. for a Covid test. She said it would take us an hour to reach the hospital so they would need to confirm all the arrangements before 3 p.m.

A further telephone call came in at about 3:10 p.m. and everything was arranged provided Jenny could arrive before 5 p.m. for the Covid test.

It was 3:30 by the time we set off, expecting to have to cope with all the school traffic. As it turned out, it wasn't that bad and we were there for just after 4:30 p.m. I waited in the car in one of the drop-off bays, for which there was 30 minutes free parking, while Jenny went in for the test.

It was busy on the way back, as one might expect and I called at Tesco in Bury for some fuel, since the tank was running low and I had to make the trip twice tomorrow.

Tea was ready for about 7:30 and we went to bed earlier than usual, just after Jenny's 10 p.m. medication.

Thursday, 3rd February 2022

It was a 5:30 a.m. start and we were on the road by 6:30 a.m. There wasn't a lot of traffic and we arrived just after 7:30 a.m. after taking our time and stopping at a retail park for Jenny's 7 a.m. medication.

I parked in one of the drop-off bays again and walked Jenny to the door and then made my way home via Matthew and Carrie's house to collect the junction box Matthew had ordered for me, for the patio light and sensor wiring.

Jenny had telephoned me using the hospital telephone as I was on the way home to say she had no money on her mobile phone to make calls or send texts. I said I would top up her phone when I arrived home, so this was my first task. As it turned out, although I topped up her phone for her, her account was over £4 in credit, so I could not understand what the problem was. I sent her a text suggesting she try turning the phone off and on again. This wasn't the first time we'd had trouble with the EE network.

After breakfast it was pot washing and rubbish emptying time, followed by labelling the marmalade jars and storing them in the fridge.

I dealt with some administration work on the PC and as lunchtime approached and I had not heard from Jenny, I tried to contact her. Her mobile phone was not receiving messages or texts. I tried telephoning the hospital ward 55 to which Jenny had said she was reporting and they had no knowledge of her. I was starting to become a little concerned and I was wondering what to do next when the telephone rang. It was a nurse saying Jenny was ready to be collected from what I thought she said was the IJ ward on the first floor, not ward 55.

I drove down to collect her, picking Matthew up on the way to assist me, since parking at the hospital was a problem and I would have to leave the car to go up to the ward.

As it turned out, Matthew spotted a parking spot with half an hour's free parking and I grabbed that before anyone else could beat me to it. I left Matthew in the car while I went up in the lift looking for the ward, which turned out to be the "Eye J" ward.

While I was waiting at reception, Jenny came out with a nurse and I took her down in the lift to the car. We drove home, dropping Matthew off on the way.

Rachel arrived a little later for tea.

Friday, 4th February 2022

We went grocery shopping to Unicorn in Chorlton, Sainsbury's store in Sale and Waitrose at Broadheath. Traffic on the outward journey was not too bad. Returning was a different story, with slow moving traffic on the motorway delaying us and we had to cope with the school traffic as we came back through Bury.

Saturday, 5th February 2022

I finished off the task of selecting and scheduling the TV recordings for the week, which I had started yesterday evening.

Jenny wanted another sheet for recording what she ate and we needed another medication timetable so I dealt with those.

Julie Southworth, our village Chairperson, came round to discuss Safeguarding with Rachel while I carried on with more PC work.

Sunday, 6th February 2022

It was a day of more work on the PC, scanning some documents and dealing with e-mails and the odd piece of snail-mail.

I listened to Jazz Record Requests as usual.

Monday, 7th February 2022

Pot washing, breakfast, e-mails, a dental check-up and minor tooth repair followed by more e-mails took me from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Following a promising, sunny start, yet more rain prevented any work outside.

I did a little tidying in the conservatory and swapped out the existing monitor and speakers connected to the desktop computer for a larger, high resolution monitor with built-in speakers, giving me more space on my desk.

I did a little tidying in the lounge and then had a good look at the satellite receiver I had connected up so that I could continue to record from the 5Select TV channel, which was no longer on Freeview. I had connected the audio/video output to the composite input on my Haupauge box, using that with WinTV to record on the new laptop.

I wanted to catalogue all the channels the receiver had found since these were not stored in logical channel number sequence.

I got as far as channel number 13.

Tuesday, 8th February 2022

I couldn't believe it was 11:30 before we were out of bed. We were both so tired from waking several times during the night to administer Jenny's eye drops.

I dealt with a few items that had been outstanding for a while, one being a Jazz CD I had purchased that appeared to have a missing track. It turned out that the last track was, in fact, two tunes, the first being St. Philip Street Breakdown that led straight into the second, St. Louis Blues.

Another was a rather complicated affair of a cassette recording of a radio broadcast featuring Marty Grosz, live from The Stables Theatre, Wavenden in 1994 that I had recorded to an MP3 file and which I intended to convert to CD. Previous attempts had not been terribly successful due to the quality of the recording and I had tried in vain to locate the archived recording at the BBC, intending to request it be broadcast again. As far as I could gather, no other recording of the programme existed, so my CD would be unique. Apart from the announcer's introduction, this time I managed to obtain decent quality tracks of the first three tunes and there I had to leave off. The process was somewhat time-consuming but the end product would be really worthwhile.

We did have the good fortune to see Marty Grosz live at the Rhythm Station in Rawtenstall some years ago. He was an excellent guitarist and vocalist and his playing was always interspersed with amusing, vocal interludes.

Wednesday, 9th February 2022

I took Jenny to the eye hospital for her follow-up appointment at 8:40 a.m., dropped her off and parked up on a side-road to listen to Louis Armstrong and read Private Eye. Jenny was there for about two hours and came out with yet more medication.

We called at Tesco in Prestwich on the way home for some fish for tea and had a light, late lunch at home after I had brought Jenny's medication timetable up to date, adding the two new items and dropping off a redundant one.

Since it was now mid-afternoon, there was little point in starting anything significant so I brought the accounts up to date, dealt with a few e-mails and started thumbing through next week's TV listings in the Radio Times for programmes to record.

Thursday, 10th February 2022

After a long day yesterday, I was shattered and didn't rise for breakfast until 11 a.m., after which, I felt like going back to bed.

Instead I saw Jenny off to her hair appointment at Cream in the village, scheduled for 12:45 a.m. It wasn't until after she had gone that I saw she had not put the chicken in the oven to roast for tea. I promoted myself from the position of sous-chef and promptly placed the chicken in to roast after fishing in the waste bin for the wrapper to find the cooking time. Needless to say, I washed my hands thoroughly between these two actions.

I now had two time-critical tasks. The first was to remember to go round to the hair salon to give Jenny her 2 p.m. eye drop and then I had to check the chicken's progress after 1¼ hours, remove the foil and turn it over for the rest of its cooking time, about another 45 minutes. There was about a ten minute gap between these two events, more by luck than judgement.

While it was currently not raining, there was a lot of cloud about and some daunting clouds with a strong, very cold breeze and, following a heavy hail storm this morning while I was in the land of nod, more rain was forecast for this afternoon, so there was no opportunity for any work outside. Moreover, tomorrow was forecast to be a nice dry, cold day but we would be grocery shopping and after that, rain was forecast every day for ever. At least, it seemed like it. And I hadn't even started building the ark.

I looked through the rest of the coming week's TV listings, deciding what to record. Jenny had already looked at the Radio Times and not found anything she specifically wanted to watch.

Friday, 11th February 2022

We didn't make the early start we planned and it was 11 a.m. before we left for Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park. We called at Tesco in Prestwich on the way back and then hit the school run as we approached Bury at about 3 p.m. Road works on the A58 to Bolton, just past our turn-off to Ramsbottom, Greenmount and Tottington, resulted in a tail-back blocking our route, largely because inconsiderate drivers had queued across junctions instead of leaving a gap for when the traffic lights changed.

I finished off checking I had not missed any recordings of TV series we watched that were scheduled for the coming week before tea.

I scheduled the recordings for tomorrow before retiring for the night.

Saturday, 12th February 2022

We were up early. Well early for us. It was 10:30 a.m. when we came downstairs for breakfast.

It was 12:30 p.m. by the time we had breakfasted and I had finished washing, wiping and storing away the dishes from last evening and this morning. I thought Jenny had nodded off again in the lounge but she hadn't. She had been updating her new diary with all the annually recurring events, like birthdays and such.

I dealt with one e-mail and deleted a load of junk messages.

Jenny wanted help with changing our bed linen. What was a fifteen-minute job turned into a major cleaning exercise, vacuuming the mattress protector, removing the mattress and vacuuming and dusting the bed frame, the carpet underneath, mobbing and cleaning my bedside cupboard, etc., etc.

We left off for a mid-afternoon snack and I took the opportunity to schedule the TV recordings for the next few days of the coming week. The meal was followed by another quick look at my e-mails and then we briefly resumed work in the bedroom, finishing off a few loose ends where we had left off and making the bed for tonight. The intention was to resume cleaning tomorrow.

My bedside lamp shade needed cleaning so I tried removing it. The plastic ring holding it in place was cross-threaded and I broke the bulb fitting while trying to free it. Jenny gave me her lamp since she was not reading in bed at present due to her glaucoma.

I had a look at the damaged lamp and removing the existing fitting with the intention of trying to replace it was far more difficult than expected. I ended up cutting and breaking it off in pieces. It seems it had stuck or had been glued onto the thread of the metal support. I put the lamp on one side until I could find a new fitting.

I updated my accounts.

Chatting with Matthew, we receive an invitation to lunch tomorrow at the local Miller and Carter pub, about five minutes' walk away, with Matthew, Carrie and Carrie's parents, Bob and Marie. That would seem to have upset our cleaning plans for tomorrow but one had to get one's priorities right.

Sunday, 13th February 2022

Following the feverish activity of yesterday, my abdominal pains were back with a vengeance. Despite the discomfort, we did go for lunch at the Miller and Carter (aka Bull's Head) in the village with Matthew, Carrie, Bob and Marie for a belated celebration of Jenny's Birthday. The meal was fairly good. While the gluten-free choice was limited, Jenny and I found a starter and a main course we liked and both exceeded our expectations. The one criticism was that there was a distinct lack of green vegetables with the main course, the only one comprising a few leaves of wilted spinach inside a bed of mashed potatoes. We were used to eating a lot of green vegetables, both in terms of quantity and variety. My guess was that most people were not, which is why they were not served with the meal, avoiding wastage. There was a side order of vegetables available which, with afterthought, Jenny and I should have ordered, possibly to share.

That more or less was our day.

I topped and tailed it with shuffling some data around on my various hard drives to create more space where I needed it.

Monday, 14th February 2022

Our day didn't start until lunchtime. My internals were still niggling away after treating them with hot water bottles after returning from our meal yesterday and overnight.

We resumed our bedroom cleaning. Progress was slow and we intended to finish it the following day.

Tuesday, 15th February 2022

We didn't get into the bedroom today.

I spent a little time looking for some organic turmeric capsules for Jenny and found some on the Dolphin Fitness web site. We ordered those for next day delivery.

That was followed by a longer search for some cotton pyjamas for Jenny and I found three possible products Jenny liked. The really nice ones were by Tu in Sainsbury's store. These had been discontinued. The one possibly available in store was on the Next web site. The store in Bury had closed. There was a store at the Manchester Fort trading park, which was on the way to Manchester and we would be passing that twice tomorrow when Jenny attended her review at the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital. The problem with ordering online was that it was difficult to ascertain whether the clothes would fit or not.

I nipped round to the village store for next week's Radio Times.

After that I backed up my documents, which I should have done at the weekend and dealt with a load of e-mails.

Wednesday, 16th February 2022

I was up before 5:30 a.m. and Jenny a little later. We left for Jenny's appointment at the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital just after 7 a.m., expecting there to be a good deal of traffic. In fact we made good time. We arrived at our destination just after 8 a.m. and found a 30 minute free parking spot for dropping off patients. Jenny's appointment was not until 8:40 a.m. so we sat and chatted in the car for a while.

As Jenny went into the hospital, I drove off to my usual parking spot on a side road a few minutes from the hospital and waited there, listening to Jazz CDs and reading Private Eye, until Jenny called me on my mobile phone to say she was ready to come home.

Jenny's progress was excellent and her medication had been significantly reduced, with a follow-up appointment in two weeks' time.

We called at Tesco in Prestwich on the way home for some fish for tea.

After lunch at home, I continued reorganising files on my hard drives and looking through next week's Tv listings for programmes to record.

I boke off to deal with the dishes from last evening, this morning's breakfast and today's lunch.

I took Jenny for her dental appointment with the hygienist at 4 p.m. By that time, the first of two trans-Atlantic storms was beginning to make itself felt and the car started to rock slightly in the powerful gusts as I waited for Jenny. This storm was expected to be worst overnight as it crossed the country. The more severe storm was not due until Friday.

On returning, I carried on with my activities on the computer until tea was ready.

Thursday, 17th February 2022

My main assignment for the day was to lay and stoke the fire to generate enough heat in the lounge for the bread Jenny made to rise prior to baking.

I took the opportunity to finish shuffling my data around on my portable hard drives and to tidy up TV recorded programmes we had watched over the last week or so. I also finished thumbing through next weeks Radio Times for programmes to record which only left me with the task of scanning the electronic schedules for episodes of series I might have missed and to schedule the recordings.

Towards the latter half of the day my abdominal pains were back and quite irritating and distracting. I suspected I may need to consult my GP.

Friday, 18th February 2022

The plan was to go grocery shopping. We decided against that because of the amber weather warning of wind (nothing I'd eaten). Storm Eunice was due around 1 to 2 p.m. with gusts of up to 60 m.p.h.

Instead, I cleaned out the fire. We recommenced cleaning our bedroom and I tackled the window (curtain rail, PVC and glass) before lunch.

Checking on the pending storm, the worst of it was not now due until mid-afternoon. At 1 p.m. the wind gusts were supposed to be up to 50 m.p.h. but there was no sign of such. Other parts of the country were hard hit with high winds, rain, snow and ice. London and the south east had its first ever red warning of wind for later today. Perhaps the politicians in Parliament might now start taking climate change seriously.

After lunch, I checked for episodes of TV series I had not seen and listed these for recording.

The predicted storm intensity did not seem to mature here, although it was quite wet, windy and cold outside.

Finally, I scheduled all the recordings for the coming week.

Saturday, 19th February 2022

We went grocery shopping, postponed from yesterday. The original plan was to go down to Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath, near Altrincham. Since it was snowing quite fast, we decided to shop fairly locally, at Sainsbury's in Heaton Park and Tesco in Prestwich.

The most direct route to Sainsbury's store was down the M66 motorway and the quickest way to that was straight across the valley to the west of us, through the village of

Summerseat and up the single-track road, Bass Lane. Since that meant some steep climbs, I decided not to risk it in the snow and to pick up the M66 on the far side of Bury.

Matthew had telephoned us to let us know there were road works causing long delays along Brandlesholme Road, which we would normally take to Bury and also on the far side of Bury on the A56, our normal route to Manchester.

I took the alternative route to Bury, through Tottington and reached the M66 without any delays. The visibility on the motorway was not good due to the heavy snow and most drivers were travelling at a sensible speed, given the driving conditions. There was, of course, the odd idiot belting down the fast lane at or exceeding the 70 m.p.h. speed limit with no hope of stopping should he or she encounter an obstruction or of controlling the vehicle to steer round an obstruction.

By the time we had finished at Sainsbury's store, the snow had turned to rain and most of it had melted away.

We called at Matthew and Carrie's house on the way home from Tesco but there was no reply so we came home, the roadworks on the A56 causing only a minor inconvenience.

I had to clear the drive of snow to bring the car down under the car port since it had lingered here in Greenmount.

After a quick snack, I read the meters and submitted the readings to the utility companies for this month's bills.

I just had time to scan a couple of documents that needed filing before tea.

Sunday, 20th February 2022

I finished off this week's Radio Times crossword, breaking off to wash the dishes from last evening and this morning, followed by emptying the recycling waste into the various bins, the general waste and finally the vegetable waste into the compost bin.

We tackled the cleaning of our bedroom again, with only the tops of the wardrobes left to do.

I went onto the garden to put food out for the birds in the raised beds. The garden was very wet from all the recent heavy rain and melted snow and it has partially flooded at the top end, covering part of the patio.

I resumed work on the Marty Grosz recording, converting the cassette tape recording to individual audio tracks, suitably adjusted to remove noise, improve tonal quality and boost the volume. I used the finished tracks to create a CD.

More heavy rain had flooded the patio and I went out in my wellies and waterproof jacket in the rain to find out why. The drain at the top corner of the garage, which took all the water from the garage and car-port roof, was blocked. I removed dead leaves from the grate cover and then the grate cover by hand. The U-bend in the drain was blocked.

Fortunately, I was able to free it with a thin, wooden pole and water started gushing down the drain. The water level on the patio did not reduce particularly rapidly despite the flow down the drain and the reason soon became clear. Water was draining under the fence concrete base panels from the public land which sloped down to the fence on the other side as fast as it was pouring away. The level did eventually drop and most of the flooding cleared up.

There was also water running across the drive, along the front of the garage, flowing down from the higher land on the other side of the retaining wall, which had gone slightly inside the garage. A surface drain was needed along the front of the garage to take this water to the grate in the corner by the house wall.

I ignored this for now and came in to listen to a recording of Jazz Record Requests, which, for the most part, was a waste of time. Fortunately, being a recording, I was able to skip through the tracks in which I wasn't interested, saving me quite a bit of time, instead of having to sit through a whole hour of utter rubbish on the off-chance of a decent track.

I freely admit my taste in music was very selective; classical music that is lively and tuneful but nothing melancholy or heavy, Mozart probably being my favourite choice, traditional jazz, mostly New Orleans style, some early spiritual music, some swing and quite a bit from the 1950s revival period, skiffle and a good deal of 1960s pop. Most post 1960s music of any genre, to me, was, quite frankly, just noise.

While on the subject of likes and dislikes, I had absolutely no interest in sport apart from snooker and bowls, preferably crown-green. Modern snooker, though, was far too full of showmanship and it had become more of a business than a game. Gone were the serious, entertaining days of Pot Black. Days on end of football, commonwealth games, Olympic games, cricket, rugby, golf and goodness knows what else on the TV were, for me, a nightmare. Fortunately, there was always the excellent Talking Pictures channel.

Monday, 21st January 2022

We didn't rise early and it wasn't a good day. I found the passing urine was very difficult, hot and stung like you wouldn't believe.

Fortunately, one of the GPs contacted me in response to my request on AskMyGP regarding my abdominal pain. I went up to see him at Tottington Health Centre, taking a urine sample with me. The result was that I had an infection and he prescribed a course of antibiotics. Had my temperature not been normal, he would have admitted me to hospital!

I collected my medicine and another supply of my regular tablets from the Chemist in Greenmount on my way home.

During the day, I had tidied up the TV programmes we had watched and dealt with some e-mails. I was in no fit state to do much else.

Tuesday, 22nd January 2022

I was up to have an early bowl of cereal so that I could take my second antibiotic capsule at around 7 a.m., with or after food, twice a day, at regular intervals, as on the instructions. Jenny joined me for breakfast and then went to back to bed. I fell asleep in the chair in the lounge and didn't budge until nearly 1 p.m. The antibiotics were working in that they had taken the sting out of my tail, so to speak. Passing water was another matter but at least I wasn't almost permanently resident in the bathroom like last evening.

Jenny was up and around and had prepared some lunch. She was about to bring it in to me on a tray when I wandered into the kitchen and we ate in the dining room.

I spent the afternoon in my chair working on the laptop in between frequent, painful visits to the bathroom again.

Wednesday, 23rd January 2022

Jenny had another appointment at the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital at 8:30 a.m. so I was up at 5:30 for a quick shower. I was wondering how I was going to cope with the journey into Manchester and the long wait for Jenny with out access to a loo. I did have a fairly peaceful night and much of my pain had subsided, so I thought I might be on the mend. My GP had said that the antibiotics should start to work after a couple of days and I had my fourth tablet after an early breakfast.

We left at about 7:15 and reached the hospital by about 8:10 a.m. without incident. Finding a free parking spot for thirty minutes, I accompanied Jenny into the hospital and took advantage of the toilet there. Things had improved considerably.

I had toyed with the idea of waiting with Jenny inside the hospital just in case I needed some rapid relief but the waiting area was partitioned off and seating was limited so I decided to chance parking in a nearby street and waiting for Jenny to call me when she was ready to be collected, as usual. I adjusted my seat for comfort, covered myself with the travelling blanket and fell asleep while listening to a CD of Glenn Miller for over an hour.

By the time I woke, the CD had repeated and reached more or less the point where I left off. I listened to the last few tracks, switched it off and settled down again. Jenny called about ten minutes later to say she was ready for collection. It was a good two hours since I had been to the toilet and I was only just feeling the need to go.

We had decided to do our weekly grocery shop at Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath since we were already two-thirds of the way to the former and I headed off across Manchester, through Moss Side, to Chorlton, taking advantage of Unicorn's facilities on arrival.

Not wishing to show favouritism, I did the same while shopping at Waitrose.

We were home for mid-afternoon and I was feeling much better.

After I updated the accounts, I had a quick snack for lunch, washed all the dirty dishes and then dealt with a few e-mails before tea.

I had missed most of Pointless on TV but I did managed to watch House of Games as usual, followed by the beginning of the news, leaving it on as we dined.

The terrible story of the Russian support for the separatists in the two eastern Ukraine provinces was most disturbing. In these enlightened times, one would have thought that recognition of the need for civilised people to reign fear, death and destruction on others was totally unnecessary and unproductive. Vladimir Putin was not an uncivilised man, so why should he have incited such action? The only conclusion was that he was mentally unstable and such a mentality, having the power others allowed him to have, made him dangerous, not only to the people of Ukraine, but to the whole world, including his own people and those closest to him. It was time for his nearest and dearest to place him where he could do not further harm and to repair the damage he had done. The problem with that would be if his close allies were as insane as he.

Thursday, 24th February 2022

I was up at 6:30 so I could take my morning tablet at 7 a.m., with my breakfast. Jenny joined me.

After breakfast, I started looking through the Radio Times for interesting programmes to record next week.

I left off to deal with a few routine jobs and decided to have a look at a problem of the Windows Media Centre guide update using the EPG123 software and the electronic guide made available from Schedules Direct for a modest annual subscription. While retuning Windows Media Centre picked up all the correct channels and channel numbers, the guide software did not correspond and overrode the Media Centre information, so that the new channels were not available and the channel numbers were incorrect for many of the stations. That was a time-consuming process and I gave up, having completely reconfigured everything only to end up where I started.

I did successfully retune WinTV, another application from Hauppauge, which worked with their products and which provided a more basic guide and a less sophisticated scheduler for recording programmes. I continued to use that for my recordings on the desktop computer.

After that, I went back to dealing with the TV listings for a little while.

Friday, 25th February 2022

I searched the TV schedules using NextPVR on my laptop for specific programmes in which we were interested and the various series we watched to make sure we did not miss anything.

I helped with a couple more jobs around the house and then scheduled all the recordings for next week.

I had intended to clean the vents on the desktop computer and I fetched vacuum cleaner downstairs. It was full of dust and needed emptying before I could start. I extended the vacuuming to my desk and the surrounding area and the floor in the conservatory before lunch.

After lunch, I fetched the waste paper bin that had been emptied down to its usual slot and resumed work on fixing the Windows Media Centre guide problem. An hour or so of fiddling around with the EPG123 software configuration led me to the cause of the problem. The list of stations it was using to obtain the guide was out of date and it was a case of selecting an alternative list and then implementing it. The first bit was relatively easy. The second part was achieved more by luck than anything else. The result looked alright but I didn't have time to test it because the tuning device was in use by WinTV, recording a programme.

I caught the news update on the Ukrainian situation. Vladimir Putin appeared to me to be another Adolf Hitler. He needed to be stopped and now, if the world was to have any kind of peace and security and he would best be stopped by those who are closer to him, if they were not too cowardly to do so.

Saturday, 26th September 2022

It was a nice, sunny, cold day and I commenced with a stroll across to the old school to meet Graham, who was caretaker for the day, at 9:30 a.m.

Graham had telephoned me earlier to discuss the storage of the electrical equipment I tested and Jenny and I sold at the jumble sales and the table-top sales and suggested we meet so that I could look at the proposed new storage area.

I met Graham putting up the banners for the coming table-top sale next Saturday and gave him a hand before going into the old school.

The pre-school had closed due to lack of funds and all their equipment that was stored on the stage in the hall was being redistributed elsewhere, leaving a fair amount of space that Graham suggested could be enhanced with some shelving for storing the electrical equipment instead of keeping it in the cellar. I agreed, particularly since Graham further suggested we could have our stall in the hall, adjacent to the stage, next to the proposed storage area. It would save a lot of heavy lifting and carrying up and down the cellar steps, which Jenny could no longer do and which I was finding hard work and time-consuming.

The one possible snag was that Christine, who managed the old school for the church, did not seem to agree to the suggestion, preferring to keep the equipment in the cellar, which wasn't really suitable because it was damp and cold.

Having agreed with Graham's suggestion, I came home to commence work on fitting the new sensor for the outside lamp at the back.

I double checked the position of the hole for the new wiring to make sure when I drilled through it would not be into the kitchen's tiled wall!

Drilling the hole was in stages, I started with a short masonry drill-bit, using the largest size I had. I then used a slightly larger, long masonry drill-bit to make the hole all the way through the cavity wall and I went inside the garage loft to check where the drill had emerged.

Where I moved between the fitting point outside to the garage loft and vice-versa, I had to move the ladders as well since I only had one set and I needed them to both access the loft and the fitting point outside.

The drill-bit had penetrated well inside the kitchen extension loft. Unfortunately, it was impossible for me to go into that part of the loft; I could only reach into it from the garage loft, through a gap in the brickwork between it and the garage loft and the hole was well out of reach. No matter. I had a cunning plan.

I resumed drilling to make the hole large enough for the four-core, 1.5 mm² cable. I had a short masonry drill-bit that was large enough and I used that to drill through to the cavity. My large, long drill-bit was too large for the chuck. At this point, I decided I needed a new drill.

Fortunately, the brick on the inside was quite soft and I was able to use the longer drill-bit by hand, tapping it with a hammer and twisting it to finish the hole.

The next step was to feed a length of string through the hole and pull it through to the garage loft. I made a small loop in the end of a piece of wire long enough to reach through the cavity wall and attached the string to the wire loop, leaving a large loop in the string using a bowline knot. I pushed the wire through the hole so that the string loop was visible on the inside.

I had a rodding set, comprising several lengths of glass-fibre rods and attachments. I screwed two lengths together, attaching the hook to one end, using that as a tool to hook the loop on the string. I was able to pull the string with the wire dragging behind through to the opening to the garage loft. At this point, the string was above all the pipe work and in front of an upright support the wire needed to be behind.

With some manoeuvring and reaching in, I was able to reroute the string behind the support and under the pipework. So far so good.

I attached the wire to the end of the string outside and managed to feed it through the cavity wall. The plan was to pull it through using the string. That didn't work. The wire snagged on the upright support and I could not free it using the rods. I pulled the wire back and concluded I needed someone to feed the wire as I pulled it through.

Jenny was in no shape to go up the ladders or crawl in the garage loft so I asked Matthew if he could spare an hour and he said he would pop up after lunch, so I decided to break for lunch as well.

Matthew arrived and he fed the wire as I pulled on the string. Getting the wire into the garage loft took about ten minutes.

After Matthew left, I fixed the sensor support to the wall and terminated the wires on the connector inside the sensor. That was not easy and took ages. What's more, fixing the

sensor to the support on the wall was tricky and time consuming. The design could have been much better. Time was getting on and it was turning colder, too.

With the sensor in place, I thought I might as well connect the wiring up temporarily, to the terminal block that was dangling in the garage and test it. I could reroute the wiring and fit the junction box later. I was getting tired.

With all the wiring in place, I powered on the outside lights. Since both the car-port lights and the patio lights were on the same double-pole, isolating switch, it was quite safe to work on them when they were switched off and it was easy to witch them on again.

The new sensor worked and, in its new position, above the kitchen patio doors, there were two distinct improvements. Firstly, the light was not activated by the gas boiler vent and, secondly, the lights were activated immediately anyone stepped outside.

The final job of the day, apart from tidying up, was to adjust the light sensor so that the lamp did not operate until it started to go dark. The adjustment was in daylight, so it was a bit of a guess and further testing and further adjustment would probably be required.

Monday, 28th February 2022

The rain was back.

I started my early morning by finishing my course of antibiotics with breakfast, followed by reading through the above text prior to publication.

I was shattered after yesterday and felt like going back to sleep. I edited a few TV recordings and read through this diary in preparation for publication tomorrow.

I walked across to the surgery during a fine spell to drop in a letter for Matthew which he had left with us yesterday.

I finished listening to a recording of a radio programme remembering Spike Milligan.

After editing more recorded programmes, interspersed with lunch, I resumed cataloguing the details of the satellite channels on the free-standing Ross tuner. I discovered the information regarding frequencies of the channels on the Astra 2E satellite were not up to date on the web site I was using to correlate the information and I posted a message to that effect.

And so ended my uneventful day.