

**Greenmount
January 2001**

Wednesday, 14th January 2001

Greetings One and All

By now, it's probably nearer one than all. However, I digress. And in this light, I look quite handsome doing so, even if I do say it myself.

It has been several days, if not weeks, since I last corresponded and I'm feeling withdrawal symptoms. All this due to pressure of work at home, at work, internally - but you wouldn't want to get wind of that, if you get my drift.

Since I sent my last coded message, I have been for an Ultrasound scan. Now I know how all those expectant mums feel. Anyway, the doctor who performed this technological miracle could find nothing untoward and said so. I have since had a letter from the physician, who turns out to be a liver specialist. I should have realised that bottle of Chianti was sitting on his desk for a reason. The letter confirms the verbal diagnosis and I have been invited back to discuss my progress on Monday next.

You will all be pleased to hear I am feeling much better and put the whole thing down to over-stretched muscles.

The kitchen progresses. All eleven eye-ball spots are installed in the ceiling and working, even if there are wires dangling out of a couple of holes providing temporary connections. These should be tidied this weekend and the ceiling should receive its first stage treatment.

I have decided to tidy up the wiring in the garage too. This was a good idea since it was hanging off the wall and contravened every regulation in the book and some not in the book. Most of this is now encased in nice, shiny, white plastic casing, 25 mm by 40 mm and I am encased in dirt and grime of much greater dimensions.

The builder has been busy and we now have a concrete floor and an almost complete brick wall round it. The cats found the wet concrete wonderful and formed an immediate bond with it. Well, almost. It is covered in paw prints. Kevin (not Bob) the Builder has also inserted metal backing boxes in the inside wall for electrical wiring. I now have to buy some wire and figure out how to get it from inside the house to inside the cavity of the conservatory wall. And I have to do this before Anglian come to fit the windows and roof. I also need to arrange to have the heated floor installed. Yes, we have decided to go for electrical under-floor heating.

The tour of duty in Ipswich went well, almost as well as planned. Apologies to T&J for not contacting you but Jon (one of my team) and I had a lot to do and a couple of late nights.

I spent yesterday (Tuesday) afternoon in Hull wandering round the A&E department watching patients rolling about in agony, first on the trolleys in the corridor and then on the corridor floor as they fell off. You can only get treatment like that on the NHS. I was there to work out what was required to install our new computerised A&E system. I managed to avoid most of the blood as it squirted from open wounds and splattered against the walls. Quite decorative, I thought.

On Friday, I am going up to Scotland. I have to visit our office in Irvine (a little south of Glasgow) on Saturday and I am taking Jenny with me, staying near Kilmarnock on Friday night.

Today, being St Valentine's Day, I was thinking of buying Jenny some flowers. Jon at work told me the best offer he had was £36 for a dozen red roses. I said he could buy a good hammer drill for that price.

My CV is now with about a dozen agencies, only one of which has contacted me since. My ploy seems to be working.

Not much news to report on Jenny or the offsprings. Rachel has, unfortunately, had another University rejection. Bristol has refused her a place. We are not sure why.

Last night saw Jenny and I return to the Jazz club, for the first time since before Christmas, where we were entertained by Alan Barnes, that wellknown multi-instrumentalist (well, Sax and Clarinet) genius (Tommy's words, not mine). Perhaps I should explain that Tommy is the resident band leader and must be in his 80s. If playing the Sax does that for you, I wish I had taken up the practical side of music years ago. Mind you, when they said Sax, I must have misheard.

Next week sees Marty Grosz return. This guitar player with his one-man show is so funny and entertaining and such a good player that he should not be missed.

The following week is the Leeds College Big Band with a Duke Ellington bent. I never knew that. Jenny does not like big bands because they are too loud. I must say that the small room does not lend itself to such ensembles because the band often outnumbers the audience. Still, the Duke Ellington sound is somewhat tempting, even if it is noisy.

For those in foreign parts, the weather here has moved from torrential rain to clear blue skies and heavy overnight frost. It is nice to see the sun again after so many months.

I have had a request for my mailing address, so for those of you who want to put pen to paper (as opposed to keeping livestock in it), you will find it at the bottom of my E-mails to you, should you be fortunate enough to receive one.

We are, naturally, resident in England. England is that little island just off Europe. Some people actually think it is part of Europe. Others think it is just apart and quite rightly too.

I will send more information as and when I have a lucid moment.

Yours in a drunken stupor

Al Coholic.