

Greenmount – January 2013

New Year's Day this year was a quiet affair with just the three of us sitting down to a small but adequate and delicious roast pork dinner about five p.m. This contradiction in terms was caused by a time-shift as a result of us not stirring and breakfasting until lunch-time.

The day was mostly cloudy, cold and showery, the excessive precipitation of the previous year having no respect for the start of a new one.

Jenny ventured out on foot to the local co-op to fetch some eggs of the free-range but non-organic variety, urgently needed for the home-made profiteroles. Had she realised how low our stock had become, we would have purchased some organic ones on our last visit to the supermarket and, as a result, Jenny had her wrists slapped.

Jenny commented on the large number of people taking advantage of a fine spell to go walking down the Kirklees Trail. Lucky them.

I spent the day writing my Monthly Updates and publishing the one for December on my web page.

On Wednesday 2nd January, we ventured into Ramsbottom despite the rain and, apart from the usual tour of the charity shops, we also popped into Memories, which is not noted for its competitive pricing. Needless to say, we didn't buy anything there. Jenny did manage to find a couple of books she thought she didn't have so our day was not wasted.

On Thursday 3rd January, I joined the chaps for an early start, 8 a.m. at Steve's house and Lavinia gave us a lift to Bury. We just missed the 9 a.m. train to Whaley Bridge and, with an hour to kill, made good use of the Costa Coffee stall in Piccadilly Station. From Whalley Bridge, we walked along the Peak Forest canal towpath to Marple, with a slight detour to visit the very interesting Bugsworth Basin. The weather was fine but overcast as we left home and it was just starting to drizzle as we arrived in Whaley Bridge. From there, although the towpath is flat (there are no locks in this section of canal), the weather went downhill and we were quite wet on the outside by the time we reached the pub in Marple. We were soon wet on the inside as well.

This was a short walk and, having stopped under a bridge, to shelter from the rain, for hot mulled wine and Stollen, brought by Frank, we had decided to press on and ignore lunch, hoping to find food in Marple. Alas, the pub had stopped serving lunch by the time we arrived and the kind landlord had no objection to us devouring our own sandwiches, so long as we bought his beer. Being a Robinson's pub, this was not a stumbling-block.

On Friday 4th January we went to Unicorn in Chorlton for our groceries, followed by a visit to Costa Coffee in the Tesco Store in Bury for lunch as usual. We called at the Health Food Store in Bury Market for a bottle of cranberry juice and a packet of the organic buckwheat cereal we like. There was still no sign of any Granovita brown sauce, organic or otherwise. We nipped into Alan Garvey, the bathroom shop and plumbers, for some sealant for the kitchen sink and the bath before completing our shopping in Tesco.

On Saturday 5th January we spent the day putting away the Christmas decorations, the tree and other bits and pieces, generally tidying the place, not that you'd have noticed. There was a lot more room in the lounge but I was sure Jenny will fill it with something.

I remembered to follow up my faulty dehumidifier replacement/refund with Rob at dehumidifiersuk.com, aka aircon247.com. Two phone calls and a returned call later, there was a discussion about the E-mail from Provic, the manufacturer, to Rob, copied to me, authorising the replacement/refund and which Rob said he had not received. He asked me to send him a copy, which I did, making sure I requested a delivery and read receipt. The message was definitely delivered, which was more than could be said for my replacement dehumidifier.

On Sunday 6th January, we spent most of the day moving the junk out of the small bedroom so Keith and Angela would have somewhere to sleep when they arrived on the 8th. Some of it found its way onto the landing, stacked high in boxes. The old commode that belonged to my mother's mother, the repository of which is filled with potpourri for good taste and smell, was positioned in the dining room and some remaining boxes of car booty found their way onto the top of our huge wardrobes.

After lunch, I had a fiddle with web page development using XHTML and CSS, followed by a session of cleaning the new cats' latrine. They have adopted the new, currently bare plot of garden at the side of the house and at the very front of the property, no doubt in an attempt to mark their territory, not to mention the stone wall. It has to be said this area has needed some attention for months, the constant rain since last June making the job impossible and this opportunity of both spare time and a fine afternoon was too good to miss. Would you believe I removed two bucket-fulls of the stuff? And I thought dogs were a bit of a pain.

Not satisfied with that, I commenced cutting another log to try to reduce the amount of wood on the drive. I managed just one, large log before deciding enough was enough and I retreated indoors, tired and soaking wet from perspiration, which makes something of a change from being soaking wet from the rain.

On Monday 7th January, I was up early, showered, fed the cats, washed the pots from the night before, breakfasted, took Jenny a cup of tea in bed, washed the pots I had used and was half way through updating the village web site when Mike called to take me and Frank down to Summerseat Garden Centre for the usual, weekly breakfast meeting. Steve was unable to join us because he had gone on the village walk, led by Alistair. Had the weather been better, Jenny and I would have gone but it was dull, grey, misty and damp. No change there, then.

Mike and Frank ate a hearty breakfast as I looked on sipping my tea and, subsequently, water, which I managed to spill down my front in a strategic location, dampening my ardour.

I was home for about 11 a.m. and Jenny was busying herself in the kitchen as I explained my mishap. I changed into working clothes and finished off the web site updates as well as the accounts, only just remembering to renew the house insurance with Esure, the cost having dropped by about 2%, probably because we don't live on a flood plane.

After lunch, I played with CSS and XHTML, trying to figure out how to centre text horizontally in a chosen space on a web page, something for which, apparently, XHTML was not designed to do.

After fiddling for about half-an-hour, I gave up and decided to scrub the kitchen and hall floors the old-fashioned way – on my knees. The cats found this most entertaining.

That done, I retired to my computer again to update the record of my day's achievements.

On Tuesday 8th January we were frantically tidying up in preparation for our antipodean visitors. Keith and Angela arrived about 4 p.m. and we all went out to the Red Lion in Hawkshaw, joined by Matthew and Carrie, for a family meal. This was the first time I had noticed that the pub was a member of the John Willie Lees chain and, in my opinion, if this was a recent development, to say it had not improved the quality of the food was an understatement. I only classed it as satisfactory. The Waggon and Horses was better by far the last time we ate there.

On Wednesday 9th January our first task was to assist Keith and Angela with the return of their rental car to Manchester Airport before making our way for them to explore Keith's mother's roots in Sheffield.

The signposts to the car rental village at the airport were barely adequate, as far as they went. Supplemented by some intuitive guesswork, we found the Europcar returns without too much difficulty.

From there, we headed out along the M67 and sailed through Mottram without the usual, long tailback at the end of the motorway. Not only that but the heavy fog suddenly lifted as if by magic to reveal bright sunshine and blue skies as we reached the peak of the Snake Pass. Looking back towards Manchester was like flying above the clouds, hanging over the hills to the west as they sloped away. We stopped briefly at the Pennine Way for a photography session and headed on to Hillsborough Park, from which we explored Bickerton Road, the Wednesday Ground, Dunella Road and Wadsley Church, with a brief excursion into Hillsborough itself.

On returning home, detoured at Oughtibridge over to Halifax Road because of a serious road accident, the road to Wharncliffe Side being closed by the police, we strolled across to the Bull's Head for tea and staggered back.

Thursday 10th January was an early start. Keith and Angela needed to be at the airport at 7 a.m. for their flight to Paris and we had to leave home about 6 a.m. Being quite tired, not having slept well and up at 5 a.m., I wasn't firing on all cylinders and, while we managed to get to the drop off point at terminal three without incident, I took the wrong turning onto the M56 on the return journey and ended up at the A556. A quick U-turn round the roundabout put us back on track on a very busy motorway and I almost took the wrong turning onto the M60, heading south instead of north. Fortunately, I was able to correct my mistake at the last minute without causing anyone any grief and, home safe and sound, promptly fell asleep in the chair. That was not a good idea and, on waking, I felt jet-lagged for the rest of the day.

We had to wait in on Friday morning, 11th January, for a delivery by UPS, having been shipped from Germany a couple of days previously. This was part of Rachel's birthday present. On opening the package, we found the items had been manufactured in Taiwan. So much for carbon footprints.

It was mid-afternoon before we commenced our weekly grocery shop and the purchase of the final part of Rachel's present in Bury. Needless to say, we did not venture down the motorway to Unicorn at this late juncture. We thought we would save that treat for the following morning.

And so we did. Unicorn, followed by Asda at Pilsworth was the order of the day on Saturday 12th January, after wishing Rachel a happy 30th birthday. After a quick lunch, Jenny and Rachel went off to the Trafford Centre to see *Les Misérables*, leaving me to sort out my media, which seems to be a never-ending task and, of course, wash the pots, feed the cats and get my own tea.

Sunday 13th January proved to be a late start and by the time we were out for a walk, the clouds had started to roll in, no doubt preparing for the snow forecast for the next couple of days, putting the skids (literally) on our plan to go biking in the Peak District, since Rachel was on holiday from work for a couple of weeks. Jenny and I had a quick saunter up and round the golf course.

On returning, it was back to the outdoor chores while it was still fine and I emptied the recycling bins, checked the tyres on Rachel's car, diluted some screenwash ready for use, topped up the screenwash in Rachel's car and cleaned the cats' latrine at the front AGAIN. I thought I must put something in there to stop them digging – and if they didn't, it would be them.

We dined out at the Beefeater at Heaton Park, with a voucher for one free main meal, to round off a most leisurely and productive day.

I had planned on breakfasting at Summerseat Garden Centre with the chaps on Monday 14th January. With Rachel being off and us thinking of doing something together, I cancelled. As it turned out, we decided not to go to the Peak District because of the overnight and early morning snow. Instead, I decided to have a go at cleaning my Canon i990 printer.

The printer had refused to automatically load paper to print documents the previous day and I thought at first that there was something wrong with the paper sensing mechanism. I then noticed the status monitor on screen was telling me that the used ink tank was almost full. I didn't even know it had one.

I searched the Internet for a clue to the meaning of this message, there being nothing helpful in the Canon Help file. I found some useful suggestions, most of which indicated that this was Canon's idea of built-in obsolescence. Not deterred, I searched on and found that the use dink tank is nothing more than a layer of shaped sponges in the bottom of the printer that soak up waste ink. These needed to be removed, washed, dried, the printer cleaned and the sponges replaced. Then all I had to do was to press the power and reset buttons repeatedly in a certain sequence to clear the error in the printer hardware/software.

First things first. I found the four holes in the case, two at the back, one near each side and one on each side, near the back, through which one had to poke a screwdriver to release the clips holding the upper case in place. Lifting the upper part of the case from the rear and tilting it forward released it from the clips at the front and I was able to carefully remove it, freeing the wiring to the switches and the USB port on the front right with some difficulty and place it on its right-hand side close to the printer so as not to stretch the wiring still attached to the front panel.

There was a small, black pad on the base of the printer, to the left, over which the head passed and, I thought, this is it! Before proceeding, I donned a pair of plastic gloves, as recommended. It soon became apparent that this was a wise precaution.

I removed the pad, washed it under cold running water to reveal its true colour, orange and put it to dry on the radiator. Using a cotton wool bud, I started to clean the underside of the repository for the sponge when I realised there was another, much larger pad underneath it. Then I found a whole load of pads near the front left – three layers of them. I removed two of these, washed them and put them to dry. The third was part of a much larger pad that ran under the whole width of the printer and it was at this stage I almost gave up.

It took me a good half hour to find just two screws that held the whole printer assembly in place, one near each side right at the back, on the base. At this point I was thinking that Canon could have designed a much better waste ink system, or something to that effect.

I removed the two screws and lifted the carriage assembly, with cartridges, intact and it came away from two plastic clips holding it in place at the front. I removed two large pads from underneath, washed them and put them to dry.

Then I found another two pads under the right-hand side, right under the print head and dealt with those.

I cleaned the bottom of the printer with a copious supply of tissues and, thanks to the gloves, managed to avoid creating a spectacle akin to the Black and White Minstrel Show, for those who can remember it.

So, having consumed several cotton-wool buds, half a box of tissues, half a kitchen roll and one pair of latex gloves, I had a clean(ish) printer in bits with no less than eight foam pads dripping the residue of coloured ink on the dining room radiator as they dried and a grey kitchen sink.

While the pads continued to dry, a process not to be hurried, especially in this climate, I helped Rachel configure her new Kindle Fire and we had that up and running in a few minutes.

On Tuesday 15th January I put my printer back together with some difficulty and connected it back up. With information from the Internet and a bit of trial and error, I was able to clear the printer status by pressing the power and resume buttons in a certain sequence, a procedure not unlike those to be found in the Masons, I am given to understand. In fact, I think Canon is a member. These button sequences are, apparently, sworn to secrecy within

the company and they will not release them to a mere mortal such as I. I have advised Canon I am unlikely to be buying any more of their products if they continue to take this attitude. I would urge others to do likewise. It doesn't bode well to be associated with idiots. I should know.

We had a busy day on Wednesday 16th January. Rachel, being off work for a couple of weeks, had expressed a desire to go places, although this was not really the time of year to be out and about. Still, we braved the cold and had a nice day in Liverpool, a city I had not visited for many years and which I found most impressive. There were poor, derelict areas but the waterfront and the centre were very nice and had been well developed and improved.

Like most cities, the centre was lacking in road signs and we had some difficulty finding our way back out to the M62.

In the evening, we attended the village meeting, held for the first time at the local primary school and preceded by a tour of the facilities by the head teacher, Mr Griffith. It was interesting to see the huge variety of subjects taught and the variety of materials available to the children, a far cry from my early days.

Thursday 17th January was one of those pottering about days when you seem to be doing a lot and time flies by and then you wake up the next morning and wonder what you did.

Friday 18th January was another grocery shopping day followed by an evening, for me, on a Scout Training Course at Christine's house. A group of us watched a training DVD and chatted and we thought that was it. Wrong! Each of us had to draft some understanding of the training and then subsequently discuss it with a training assessor on a one-to-one basis. I was nominated to obtain some materials and draft the notes for everyone else to crib.

On Saturday 19th January we nipped into Ramsbottom for a brief tour of the shops and one or two items of groceries. Apart from that, I was busy on the computer rewriting my web site using XHTML and CSS.

My enthusiasm for this development continued into Sunday 20th and was to fill the odd few minutes/hours of free time for some days following.

I managed to crawl out of bed on Monday 21st January to give me sufficient time to be ready for Mike when he called to collect me for the usual Monday morning breakfast meeting with the chaps at Summerseat Garden Centre.

What I didn't allow for in this instance was good old Plan B, that being invoked by Mike, in the form of a meeting fifteen minutes earlier at the Bull's Head to walk down to the garden centre, probably owing to the overnight couple of inches of snow, making escape from the estate road by car difficult, if not impossible, due, in part, to our steep, uphill drives.

Having agreed to rush my breakfast, which I always eat at home before the meeting anyway, to complicate matters, Jenny invoked Plan C. This was, after washing the pots, a stroll through the snow with her and I promptly withdrew from the prior engagement.

Without any sense of purpose, we headed up the road towards the golf course, my brief being to find a walk without any hills and a watering hole for lunch. Our route, which I devised on the hoof, so to speak, took us along the golf course and fields to Bolton Road West, across the road up Redisher Lane into Redisher Wood, down, across the bridge over the stream, turning right to Holcombe Brook, sharp left up Holcombe Old Road to Holcombe village, across the main road and down the Rake into Ramsbottom, where I had scheduled lunch. Having left home at about 10:30 a.m., we had completed this part of our trek in an hour and a half. Jenny decided it was too early to eat and my challenge was then to find an alternative location. We went down to Nuttall Park and followed the River Irwell to Summerseat, arriving at the Garden Centre for 1 p.m.

After lunch we headed home by the direct route, up the steps by Summerseat Lane, across Longsite Road and up Vernon Road.

It would have been time to complete a number of tasks, including updating the village web site, on my desktop computer, had it loaded Windows XP. Unfortunately it didn't – AGAIN!!!

It took me a good three hours to recover the PC to some sort of useable state but it didn't last and I spent all day Tuesday 22nd January trying to recover Windows XP without having to rebuild it from scratch.

I forgot my woes on Wednesday 23rd January, as Mike, Frank and Steve arrived for 8 a.m., just as I had finished clearing the overnight snow off the drive so Jenny could give us a lift to Bury to catch the tram to Castlefields. We were walking the Bridgewater Canal from Manchester to Lymm, some 15 miles. Alighting from the tram, we took a scenic one mile detour round the deserted area of the tram stop in search of a coffee shop to fuel ourselves in readiness for the stroll.

Following a coffee (in my case, tea) and the odd sausage buttie (definitely not in my case) by way of breakfast, we were on our way along the straight and not-so-narrow, this canal being one of the wider ones for the most part.

We stopped for lunch at a café in the old Timperley station booking office on the road above the canal before continuing our journey on to Lymm, which we reached as the light was beginning to fade. Fortunately, we found a pub before it went dark.

The next challenge was to locate the bus stop so we could get back to Altrincham to catch the tram back to Bury, with a pit stop at Victoria in Manchester for the obligatory coffee/tea and other bodily functions. It would have helped if we had got the time of the bus right. As it was, we had a twenty-minute wait in the freezing cold. That, combined with the two or three pints of beer, necessitated a search for relief in Altrincham station, found in the guise of one of these new-fangled super-loos, costing twenty pence a go. I was not impressed.

A taxi from Bury got us back to Greenmount for about 8 p.m. and ten quid.

We went grocery shopping on Thursday 24th January and I spent the rest of the day trying to fix my desktop PC.

On Friday 25th January, I left my sick PC to accompany Jenny to an appointment at Fairfield General Hospital, following a referral from our GP at the Greenmount Medical Centre to a consultant the previous Monday, which was pretty slick for the NHS. We decided to go by bus, using our free passes, from Tottington and arrived in good time for the appointment. After a short wait and a three, various examinations, Jenny was pronounced perfectly healthy, a relief to us both. Everyone was extremely kind and helpful and, more importantly, efficient, in that it had taken only five days from beginning to end to put our minds at rest. We were extremely grateful to all concerned.

As we returned, walking back to Greenmount from Tottington at about 5 p.m., it had begun to snow. The snow became thicker and heavier and it was still snowing when we went to bed at 11 p.m. It looked so nice that I took some pictures through the window from the warmth and comfort of the lounge.

We awoke on Saturday 26th January to over six inches of snow and it was soon clear that no-one was going anywhere. All three of us were out shovelling snow (it makes a change) and we finally cleared the drive, much of the road in front of it and two tracks to link up with those on the road cleared by other people so cars could be driven off the estate.

We needn't have bothered. It rained overnight and by Sunday morning, 27th January, a lot of the snow had melted.

This was Jenny's birthday – and I hadn't bought her a card, or anything. It wasn't that I had forgotten. Honest. My intention was to sneak out and buy her a card and some flowers the previous day, while she and Rachel were at a Beaver Fun Day in Shuttleworth. The snow had put paid to all those plans and we had spent a good hour the previous morning telephoning all the Beaver's parents to tell them the activity had been cancelled.

I turned my intention to my PC and the inevitable. It was time to rebuild Windows XP from scratch.

I resumed the long and boring ordeal on Monday morning, 28th January and, having made reasonable progress, decided it was time to change some of the allocated drive letters to reflect the configuration I wanted rather than that Windows had decided to allocate, which seems to change on a whim each time I rebuild the system. This was not a good idea.

Microsoft Windows is a very badly designed and illogical system and I am amazed it has the popularity it does. On the surface, it seems to do what you want it to do, most of the time and it looks quite good. Underneath, it's downright sneaky. First, it puts things you can't normally see in places you don't expect. For example, if you install Microsoft Office to drive C (your Windows system drive) and you've got a nice, fat drive D lying around with plenty of space, it will dump some Office system files on it even though you never told Office about it. Second, Microsoft has created this thing called a Registry, where software can store all sorts of reference material and then look it up later. It's a bit like a library. The problem is that if you move things around, the Registry doesn't necessarily get updated, so software starts to look for things that aren't where it put them and it gets upset when it can't find them.

So after spending several days trying to fix the damn thing, I was back at square one and not very happy. And I had given up my Monday morning breakfast meeting with the chaps for it.

Still, at least the car passed its MOT, after which we had a pleasant lunch at Summerseat Garden Centre.

On Tuesday 29th, after the routine chores (pot washing, recycling bin emptying and cleaning), we put a grocery order into Abel and Cole, much of which was for organic meat we used to be able to get at Tesco and, occasionally, Asda. A&C's gain is Tesco's loss and it serves them right.

It was time to catch up on some Beaver work, the first I had done for some time and I printed off ten Welcome Packs for new Beavers before lunch, after which Jenny disappeared off to Yoga. That left me free to catch up on this update.

I had finally had a telephone call from Rob Hannan (remember my faulty dehumidifier?) apologizing profusely for not contacting me and for the delay in resolving this fault. That was after I had sent an E-mail to Provic, the manufacturer, with a copy to Rob and threatening to contact Trading Standards in Stockport about Aircon247, the company that sold the dehumidifier to me. Rob could not arrange for a replacement for the faulty unit because there weren't any in the country and wouldn't be any until October this year. He could not organise a repair because the units were not repairable. Nor were there any alternative models from other manufacturers with equivalent features. He offered me the cut-down version of the Provic, with no heater and a lower throughput and a separate heating unit or a £20 refund in lieu of the heater. After some discussion, I suggested the fault might not be a major one because I did manage to get the heater to work on one occasion and indicated that a repair might be possible. He went away to think about it and promised to call me back in five minutes. Five hours later I was still waiting and not holding my breath.

On Wednesday 30th January we went grocery shopping to Asda at Pilsworth. Beer was on offer at four bottles for £5 so I bought four bottles of organic ale, naturally. The Honeydew organic beer had disappeared from the shelves at both Asda and Tesco, not having been there for some time and I made a mental note to find out why. I have made similar mental notes for the past several weeks and kept losing them. The wine we have come to like (Nottage Hill Chardonnay and Yellow Tail Shiraz) had both gone back up to their normal, extortionate price and I refused to buy any. Disaster was about to strike as we were down to our last couple of bottles of each. The rest of the tour round Asda was something of an anticlimax.

Exchanging E-mails with Rob, the Dehumidifier man, on our return, I resolved to accept his offer of a possible repair in two months' time. Presumably, he then went away into his back-room workshop to make the bits I needed.

On Thursday 31st January, I was out walking with the lads again, along the remaining part of the Bridgewater Canal from Lymm to Runcorn, this stretch being about 16 miles.

Frank's wife, Gwen, gave us a lift to Bury at 7:30 a.m. to catch the tram to Altrincham, where we had a twenty-minute wait, without any coffee, for the bus to Lymm. While waiting at the stop, another bus drew up, going elsewhere and a number of teenage chaps boarded. From their uniform and manner, we took them to be fee-paying, grammar school youths. One turned round, alighted from the bus, approached us and asked if any of us had a £1 coin for his bus fare as he had forgotten his wallet. Mike promptly donated the requested sum and the young lad boarded the bus again. It's amazing what grammar schools teach these days.

We arrived safely in Lymm at about 10:00 a.m. The journey had not been without amusement as, at stop after stop, increasing numbers of retired ladies and the odd retired gentleman boarded the bus, all using their free passes and all, seemingly, to know each other. We were beginning to wonder if we were on the correct bus, expecting to reach Blackpool any minute. They all alighted at Lymm and seemed to go their separate ways. It was most bizarre.

There being no sign of a coffee shop and Steve beginning to show signs of caffeine deprivation, I asked a passing lady if she knew of such an establishment in the village. Her reply was in the affirmative, asking if I could not smell the coffee and bacon cooking. She pointed us in the right direction and it was almost 11 a.m. before we started walking, after a hearty, cooked breakfast.

The going was somewhat heavy, parts of the towpath being extremely wet and the grass having been churned up by previous walkers. Nonetheless, we reached Preston Brook by about 2 p.m., having covered about 10 miles, averaging over 3 miles an hour. Fortunately, it was a nice, sunny day, although it was very cold and we had only a brief stop in the open for lunch, back on the path by about 2:30 p.m. We covered the last six miles to Runcorn by 4:30 p.m., straight into the nearest pub for a couple of well-deserved pints. There being no cask ales available at The Railway, I settled for John Smith's Smooth and made a mental note, which I shan't forget, not to go there again. Not that I'm likely to do so.

The station was just a cock-stride away, which is just as well and, with the exception of Steve, we totally confused the chap in the ticket office by asking for tickets from Runcorn to the first station inside the Greater Manchester boundary, which turned out to be Glazebrook, since, with our National Travel Passes, travel within the Greater Manchester area is free after 9:30 a.m. (That had not, of course, helped with our outward journey).

To get back to Manchester, we had to board a train towards Liverpool and change trains at the next station back to Manchester, Runcorn not being on the Liverpool to Manchester line. We just managed to reach the platform for our connection as it arrived in the station. What we didn't realize was that this was the express (in name only, as it turned out) and did not stop at Glazebrook, so our logic of buying a ticket to that point was somewhat flawed. Fortunately, no ticket inspector boarded the train so there was no requirement for an interesting discussion about rail logistics.

Following a coffee break at Piccadilly, we boarded the tram to Bury and availed ourselves of a taxi to the Bull's Head at Greenmount. This was one of those rare occasions we passed a pub and didn't go in, making our separate ways home for about 8 p.m.

It had been a long day on which to end the month.