

Greenmount January 2020

Wednesday, 1st January 2020

Welcome to a new decade. These were interesting times. The next few years would determine the future of the human race and this planet on which we live. With governments around the world more concerned with economic growth than climate change, it wasn't looking good.

On a more interesting front, the TV recording I had left being processed to fix transmission errors had finished (I hadn't a clue how long it took) with 2 Input Sequence Errors and 58,993 Audio Resync Frames added.

I decided to stick with my original edited programme where I pieced together all of the five parts between the advertisements, which we had watched and which was alright, having thrown up only 2 Input Sequence Errors.

More importantly, I helped put the whole leg of lamb in to cook and peeled the potatoes. I also prepared the mint sauce.

My next assignment was to clean the stainless steel radiator in the bathroom. After that I was free to pursue my own work.

I checked out our transport for tomorrow, another outing to Manchester. The weather forecast showed an overcast day with rain in Greenmount from about 3 p.m. and the temperature rising from 7°C to 9°C as the day progressed.

I also checked my E-mails. There was nothing pressing.

I was still struggling with TV recordings on the old Dell laptop using Windows Media Centre. I switched the important ones to the lounge laptop using NextPVR.

Matthew arrived early on his pushbike and parked it in the garage before helping his mum with what remained of the preparation for dinner.

Carrie and her parents, BOB and Marie, arrived not long afterwards and we had a lovely dinner.

Our guests left about 5 p.m. and we tidied up.

Thursday, 2nd January 2020

We had another day trip out, courtesy of Transport for Greater Manchester, to Manchester's Royal Eye Hospital where Jenny's glaucoma consultation resulted in the pre-operation assessment prior to arranging her operation by the end of February and probably at the end of January or the first week of February.

Friday, 3rd January 2020

We had another long day at the old school, dealing with the electrical jumble.

We had been crammed into a corner of the hall which was inadequate for all the equipment we had for sale and extra tables had to be provided. The cramped conditions also made testing equipment difficult and I put three boxes of untested equipment in the cellar because I did not have time to deal with it.

At home, I put in the TV programmes for the first half of the coming week.

Saturday, 4th January 2020

The jumble sale went quite well to say we did not have much room and we took over £200, which was quite reasonable.

We came home for lunch and after that, I dealt with the renewal on my security software licence for up to five PCs for one year.

I dealt with my outstanding E-mails and put in the rest of the TV recordings for the coming week before dealing with the recorded TV programmes we had watched during the previous week.

Sunday, 5th January 2020

This was the weekly grocery shopping day at Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose at Broadheath, near Altrincham. I found the journey on a Sunday was much easier and quicker than other days.

Monday, 6th January 2020

The Christmas tree should have been put away the previous day, being the twelfth day of Christmas but there simply was not the time to do so. That piece of work was deferred until today.

So far, this had been a busy year.

Tuesday, 7th January 2020

I planned on doing so much today.

I needed to start a new folder of receipts for 2020 and this was the time of year when I shredded all of the receipts from eight years previous, making sure that any financial documents that were in the old file and which needed to be retained had been scanned and stored on the computer. The empty folder was then reused.

I made it through the examination of three quarters of the receipts from 2012 before we set off to walk into Ramsbottom on a dull, damp day. At least it wasn't raining.

We toured the charity shops as usual and I found a double CD of Fats Waller for 50p in one of them. Following a fruitless visit to Morrison's supermarket, Jenny bought some organic, semi-skimmed milk from Tesco.

The hardware shop had not replenished its stock of short-handled plungers (for clearing sink waste pipe). We called at the new 'eco' shop in Bridge Street where I purchased a refill of the Faith in Nature Aloe Vera shampoo I use and Jenny bought some loose organic cane sugar in her own container, which was weighed before she filled it and some Goji berries in a brown paper bag. The shop had quite a range of loose products in dispensers.

We caught the bus back and had some lunch at home.

It was about 3 p.m. before I resumed my work on the receipts and I hadn't finished shredding before our evening TV viewing of the quiz shows and the news. I did manage to finish off my shredding later.

Wednesday 8th January 2020

Having dealt with the usual morning chores and a few administrative bits and pieces, we sat down to look at placing an online order to Waitrose for our weekly groceries at the end of the week because we were finding it difficult to schedule a shopping trip this week.

That was a disappointing waste of time because the joints of organic meat on offer on the web site were nowhere near large enough.

We gave up and looked around for an alternative organic meat supply, finding Glazegill Farm which was not that far away from us. I sent an enquiry to ask if they had a farm shop.

Given the situation, we decided to make Sunday our grocery shopping day, despite it being Rachel's birthday.

The first little job of the day was to replace two of the bulbs in the outside lamp at the back. The bulb I had recently replaced had blown and so had another so the only one working was the LED bulb and that wasn't really that bright.

I replaced the first bulb and when it came to the second one, I discovered that the replacement I had was a bayonet (B22) fitting and not an Edison Screw (E27). Having removed the faulty bulb, I left the third fitting empty. I was regretting not buying another couple of bulbs from the hardware shop in Ramsbottom yesterday.

More administration work revolved around my gastroscopy appointment.

After lunch, I washed the pots while Jenny baked a cake for D-CaFF on Friday.

Another outstanding piece of work I intended to tackle was to test a speaker bar for the old school jumble using a fibre-optic audio cable from my DVD player. Unfortunately, I couldn't find the fibre-optic cable I thought I had.

I spent a little time looking for a suitable LED bulb for the outside lights at the back and I found something called a "corn bulb". What's more, I found one that provided 2400 lumens of bright white light. I was only looking for 1600 or 1700 lumens so this looked extremely bright. I bookmarked the web site for future reference.

That took me up to about 5 p.m. I couldn't believe how quickly the day had gone. And for once, I wasn't up that late.

I had a village management committee meeting at 8 p.m. which lasted just over an hour, the main item on the agenda being the change to responsibilities following our chairman's decision to resign from the role at the end of March.

Thursday, 9th January 2020

I spent all day performing administration work on the PC.

Friday, 10th January 2020

In the morning I went to help Tracey Hayhoe take down the Christmas trees and lights in the village. We were joined by John and Julie Southworth from the village committee and Oliver Smith, the son of one of our neighbours and once in our scout beaver group, now in his late teens. According to Tracey, we had the trees down in record time! I have to say it was John who braved the ladders.

I came home for lunch before we headed off to help out at D-CaFF, our village dementia café. This week we had chair exercises, followed by a short refreshment break and then a sing-along. Jenny left at half time to go to her line-dancing class.

I was home about 4 p.m., after helping to tidy up and Jenny arrived soon afterwards. We then went to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park for a mini grocery shop.

Saturday, 11th January 2020

We went round to the old school to deal with the electrical jumble and came back home about 4 p.m. I had walked round at about 10:30 a.m. on a dull, cold day in my fleece and Jenny came soon afterwards. By the time we came home, it was pouring down and Jenny found me an umbrella at the old school to borrow for the short journey home. The umbrella saved me from a good soaking but I had to change my trousers, the ones I was wearing being wet from the knee downwards. My fleece was also wet at the bottom. Fortunately, Jenny was wearing her waterproof coat, which was dripping wet. That was all because I didn't take the car round, as I usually did.

Sunday, 12th January 2020

It was grocery shopping day again.

We stopped off at the Trafford Centre shopping mall to visit John Lewis to pick up a small present for Rachel's birthday, which was today. I took the opportunity to purchase six more pairs of cotton socks, the only place I could find pure cotton socks.

It was a short haul from there to Unicorn and not an unpleasant journey on to Waitrose at Broadheath, where we lunched as usual.

Being Sunday, traffic was not too bad and this week it seemed to be idiots' day off, for the most part.

Monday, 13th January 2020

We were up early (well, at least I was) for a trip to York. Having laid the table for breakfast, I updated this blog, my web site and worked on the TV programmes that had recorded overnight while the rest of the household managed to struggle downstairs.

Would you believe I was up just after 7 a.m. and it was 10:45 before we got off?

To be fair, I had expected to find the previous evening's dishes needed washing, drying and putting away. There were none! Jenny had done them the previous evening.

We made it to York (75 miles) in an hour and a quarter, which wasn't bad going, parked at Askham Bar and caught the bus into the city.

We potted round the old cobbled streets, visiting several shops, browsing but made no purchases. We lunched at Prêt à Manger.

Jenny had received several calls on her mobile 'phone which she had ignored because the caller's number had been withheld. When I listened to the message left by the caller, it turned out to be the consultant at the Eye Hospital who had been trying to reach her.

We made our way to the Tourist Information shop and I asked the assistant if she could look up the number of the hospital on the Internet, which she did and she wrote it down for me. I managed to contact the clinic and leave a message to ask the consultant to call again.

We had just about set off home when Jenny received a call from the clinic. All they wanted was to ask about her allergies (gluten being the only one, which she had listed on her pre-op form) and to confirm her appointment on the 30th January which I had done on her behalf by E-mail and for which I had received a confirmation of acceptance. So I didn't really understand why the clinic had to speak to Jenny about information we had already exchanged.

The journey home was horrendous. Not only did we have to contend with high winds and very heavy rain, which, at one point, obscured vision of the road and vehicles ahead, but some blithering idiot came steaming up in the left-hand lane at a speed totally

unsuitable for the conditions as I was trying to manoeuvre into it, having indicated my intention and identified what I thought was a suitable gap in the traffic. It was just as well I was edging my way out slowly. The off-side of the recklessly-driven vehicle must have missed the near-side of my car by inches. The driver must have been a complete moron and could have caused a very nasty accident. Fortunately, I hit the brakes and stopped as he or she zoomed past, after which I was able to complete my move into the nearside lane.

We drove straight to the Duckworth Arms near Ramsbottom for tea before making our way home.

Tuesday, 14th January 2019

After another early start, I left just after 8 a.m., intending to have the car at Finney's Garage by 8:30 for its annual service and MOT. The journey time should have been about ten to fifteen minutes. It took about 40 minutes.

I found myself in a very long line of slow-moving traffic very shortly after leaving home and it was like that virtually all the way. By the time I had dropped off the car and walked back to the main road, the congestion had disappeared. I had no idea what caused it.

I walked back to Bury at a fair pace and decided to try to find the short-cut, following the cycle track. My intention was to walk home along cycle route 6, which was all off-road but I had difficulty finding the access to it from where I was. Having tried one cycle route signposted "Radcliffe", expecting to find a sign to cycle route 6, I concluded that I would probably end up in Radcliffe without doing so and, after trying a very muddy path, I gave up, backtracked and walked up the main road.

By the time I reached the bottom of Brandlesholme Road, at Crosstones, it was turned 10 a.m. and I remembered Jenny needed her eye drop at 10 a.m. I caught the first bus that came, which took me up to Tottington and walked home from there.

Jenny received her eye drop at about 10:45.

I spent the day dealing with my snail mail and my E-mail, tidying up a few loose ends until the garage rang to say the car was ready, having been serviced, had a hole in the exhaust fixed, had a new rear, near-side shock absorber and an MOT.

I set off to catch the bus to Bury and was stopped by a neighbour who was on his way home. He asked me if I needed a lift anywhere and I told him where I was going. He drove me down to the garage, which was really nice of him and I thanked him.

Jenny was surprised to see me back so soon and I explained why.

I carried on with what I had been doing, before helping with the vegetables for tea.

Wednesday, 15th January 2020

Yesterday and today, I wasn't feeling that good when I woke up so I took a second of my 20 mg Omprazole tablets at breakfast, which seemed to help considerably.

After breakfast and a mammoth pot washing session, I kitted up in waterproof gear and went outside in the sunshine to wash the car.

By the time I had finished and packed up, it was lunchtime.

The plan was to leave the car to dry off on the drive, having given it a good rub down to remove as much of the residual water as possible and then polish it tomorrow.

After a late lunch, I fell asleep in the chair for a good couple of hours. I awoke just in time to watch the quiz shows on TV (Pointless and House of Games), followed by the early evening news, before tea.

Thursday, 16th January 2019

Well, the plan was to polish the car after washing it yesterday but that didn't happen.

After breakfast and a pot washing session, we decided to go down to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park, essentially for more bottled water because we were on our last one of Highland Spring.

Just before we set off, I spent a little time checking our neighbour's house because they were out and their house alarm was sounding. The house looked secure and I checked it a second time to make sure. We then spent a short while looking for a mobile number for one of our neighbours to let them know but we couldn't find it. I wrote a short note and popped it through their letter-box.

We stopped off at the Tottington Centre (the old library and now run as such by volunteers). Jenny had a book to return. While she was doing that, I walked up to the physiotherapists where I knew Jill, our neighbour, worked part-time but, I discovered, not today!

We continued our journey to the superstore.

I made the fatal mistake of telling Jenny we were in no hurry. We sauntered round the store at a snail's pace. We obtained a dozen glass bottles of water, have made the conscious decision not to buy plastic anymore and this was a stopgap measure until we could revamp the kitchen and install a water filter in the cold supply for drinking.

We also bought several other items, including some vegetables for the lasagne Jenny was making for tea.

It was about 3 p.m. by the time we arrived home and we had a late, light lunch.

I dealt with the most recent TV recordings and started to look at the recordings for the coming week, having obtained a copy of the Radio Times.

It was amazing how quickly the time passed because all that kept me occupied until the evening quiz shows came on. After those and the daily news, there was a short interval in which I continued what I had started before tea.

Friday, 17th January 2020

I spent all day putting in the TV recordings for the coming week, listening to my recently purchased double-CD of Fats Waller while Jenny went to line-dancing.

Saturday, 18th January 2020

My big day had arrived. Rachel had planned to drive me to Fairfield General Hospital for my gastroscopy but her car was iced up and I didn't have time to wait for her to de-ice it so I drove up in our car and Jenny came with me to bring it back.

We parked in the virtually empty car park just before 9 a.m. for two hours, Jenny's plan being to wait for me. My appointment wasn't until 9:30 and I didn't get to see the nurse until 9:55 a.m., at which time Jenny decided to come home.

The nurse prepared me for the procedure, including fitting a canula to my right hand for the sedation for which I had opted, based on experience.

I had another good 45 minute wait before the procedure, which, I was told, took between five and ten minutes. I didn't remember anything about it after the sedation.

I came round and was wheeled to the recovery room. I spent about an hour there, sipping water. The nurse removed my canula and went through the results with me. The investigation found no abnormalities and no cause for my symptoms. Everything appeared normal. That was good to know but didn't get me very far in working out what the problem really was.

Jenny arrived and escorted me out of the hospital. Rachel had brought her and gave us a lift home.

Lunch beckoned, not having eaten since the previous evening. After that, it was a case of doing something at which I was really good – relaxing. I wasn't allowed to do much for 24 hours, which would have suited me fine had so much not needed doing.

Sunday, 19th January 2020

We went grocery shopping to Unicorn and Waitrose as had become our usual Sunday pass-time.

I have to say we were lucky to make it in one piece, thanks to the driver (I use the term in its loosest sense) of a grey BMW.

We were travelling south on the M60 approaching junction 12 in the outside (fourth) lane at about 12:10 p.m. The vehicle in question was on our left, behind an articulated

tanker. We had just left a speed restricted section of the variable-speed limited motorway, with a de-restriction (70 m.p.h. limit) showing on the next gantry, so I started to speed up in the gap ahead. As I did so, the vehicle on my left also sped up and squeezed through the gap between my vehicle and the tanker to cut in front of me, having made the dangerous manoeuvre of overtaking me on the left and forcing me to avoid a collision by braking and steering towards the central-reservation, concrete crash-barrier. Fortunately I was able to give the driver enough room without incurring a collision and I sounded my horn long and hard.

In response the driver of the offending vehicle then braked sharply and I had to slam on the brakes hard to avoid running into the back of the vehicle. The driver then sped off and veered off to the left, taking the exit at Junction 12 to either go west along the M62 or along the M602 towards Manchester.

Apart from that, our outing was uneventful.

Monday, 20th January 2020

I spent the day tidying up some old paperwork and the record of software installed on my computer to make setting up a replacement easier in the future.

Tuesday, 21st January 2020

I continued the latter task from yesterday with a brief interlude to walk up to the dental surgery Holcombe Brook with Jenny for her filling.

Faith had called round the previous evening with a gluten-free menu for the jumbler's meal on the coming Saturday. We had initially declined the invitation because there was nothing on the fixed-price menu we fancied but we did find a main course and a sweet to suit us on the gluten-free menu and we stopped off at the Bull's Head (a Miller and Carter pub) to return the menu and to add our names and menu choices to the list.

Our meals cost more than the allocated amount from the old school, so we called in at Faith and John's house on the way back to pay the difference, since Faith was paying the whole bill, on behalf of the old school, for all 36 attendees.

Wednesday, 22nd January 2020

I continued with documenting the record of software installed on the computer for future reference. This then led me on to some work on my web site redesign, primarily to remove the reliance of the old system of using tables to lay out the contents of a web page.

Thursday, 23rd January 2020

We walked into Ramsbottom where I found two DVDs and a CD and Jenny found a book or two in the charity shops. We finished off with a visit to Morrisons and Tesco

before catching the Red 4 bus back to Longsight Road and walking back to Greenmount from there.

After a late lunch, I resumed my work on the web site.

Friday, 24th January 2020

I spent the day putting in the TV recordings for the coming week.

I took a little time out to nip into Ramsbottom while Jenny was at her line dancing class to pick up a birthday card for her.

In the evening we went to the D-CaFF social event at the cricket club, sitting with two friends Jim and Edna. We left at half-time, about 9:30, to come home and apply Jenny's eye drops at about 10 p.m.

Saturday, 25th January 2020

We went round to the old school before 10 a.m. and worked on the electrical jumble until noon.

We attended the old school jumbler's annual lunch at the Bull's Head Miller and Carter, just across the road from the old school. I had chosen the lamb and Jenny had chosen the buttermilk chicken, both followed by the blackcurrant mousse tart. The food was excellent and gluten-free. We decided against having wine with our meal because it was too expensive. We settled for a soft drink each instead, which was dear enough.

On the whole I would recommend the Miller and Carter as a place to eat based on this experience of the quality of the meal. My caveat would be that it was a little expensive, more so for its steaks and certainly for its wine. Not having tried the latter, I could not comment on its quality. On a more positive note, it did have a fair gluten-free selection. The service was a little on the slow side but that was to be expected with a large party of diners. The waitresses were pleasant and the only one slight oversight was not to provide a fork with the spoon with which to eat our desert.

We had a lazy afternoon at home. I tidied up my media on the PC after watching various recorded programmes during the past week.

Sunday, 26th January 2020

We went grocery shopping as was usual now on a Sunday. Our expedition down the M60 was uneventful except for some idiot in a brightly-coloured, small car rushing past me on the left on the slip-road joining the motorway at Prestwich. The slip-road started as two lanes and on the downhill approach, it merged into one. The left lane was a filter lane for the traffic approaching the roundabout from the south and the right lane fed off from the roundabout itself, which was the way we had come. This Charlie had come in the former direction and rushed past me as the two lanes merged, which could have been rather nasty. The vehicle in question manoeuvred its way quickly across three lanes, into the fast lane and sped off into the distance at well over the speed limit. That wasn't a

wise thing to do given that this stretch of the motorway was monitored with average speed cameras and there was a patrol vehicle parked on the left in the dip, just after the junction.

On the way home, the main road to Bury was closed just before Blackford Bridge due to a road accident and after trying to negotiate a way round it, we ended up returning to Prestwich and rejoining the M60 westbound to the next junction with the M66 and coming up that to Bury. There were no diversion signs in place.

I learnt later that a vehicle had been in collision with a cyclist or pedestrian (newspapers never could get their facts straight) and an air-ambulance had been in attendance to take the seriously-injured person to hospital. Even later, we were told that it was a cyclist, who subsequently died in hospital.

Monday, 27th January 2020

It was Jenny's birthday and Matthew's in-laws had offered to treat us to a meal.

We collected Bob and Marie just after noon and drove up to The Duckworth Arms for a very nice lunch, which was Bob and Marie's treat. Afterwards, we spent the rest of the afternoon at their home in Ramsbottom chatting.

Tuesday, 28th January 2020

I worked on the redesign of my web site again, breaking off to spend a little time topping up our groceries at Sainsbury's store, Heaton Park.

Wednesday, 29th January 2020

I tried to work out how to present the pictures on my web site in such a way that the viewer could select the images to view based on one or more keyword(s), in a similar way to Google images. Having looked into various possibilities for half the day, I was none the wiser.

I decided to continue with my web site redesign without using tables. I was working on the Greenpeace Connect pages when I remembered that there was a problem when converting the E-mail issue copy into PDF whereby the last line on a page was, for some reason, omitted in the PDF. I had a work-around but did not spot the problem until recently, so some older copies, for which I no longer had the original, had the odd line missing. I decided to press on with the rewrite and review the situation when I had finished the Greenpeace pages. There was a possibility that I might have an old E-mail archive with the missing originals somewhere on a hard drive.

Thursday, 30th January 2020

We were up at 5 a.m. and we left at 6 a.m., bound for the Manchester Eye Hospital. Jenny was due for her operation to relieve the pressure in her right eye and had to be there by 7:30 a.m.

After a lot of messing about looking for the best route to the hospital (it was too early for public transport), I decided to risk the traffic and go straight into Manchester, taking the ring road on the east side of the city. I used to use this route to travel to Manchester Royal Infirmary (the same site as the Eye Hospital) when I was working for the NHS, so the journey was not an unfamiliar one, although there had been some changes to the city centre.

The journey was straight forward and there was not a great deal of traffic so we arrived at the hospital at about 6:45 a.m. and I parked outside the door in the drop-off car park, which allowed 30 minutes of free parking.

Rachel, who had come with us and I took Jenny up to the admissions ward and we left her in capable hands at 7:10, intending to collect her later in the day, after her operation.

I dropped Rachel off at work and then made my way home. I did intend calling at Dennis Gore's chemist shop on the way but it was too early and the shop was closed. Jenny needed some more Omega 7 tablets and the ones I had ordered online from Holland and Barrett were not in stock so I had cancelled the order.

I was home for 8:45 a.m. (traffic coming back was heavy) and had breakfast. It seemed very quiet without Jenny, not that she was that noisy!

I had breakfast, washed the dishes, put the rubbish in the various recycling bins and started to tidy up a few bits of mine in the lounge. That took me until lunch time.

After lunch, I ordered Jenny some Omega 7 SBA capsules for delivery tomorrow from Dolphin Fitness, the ones I had originally ordered from Holland.

A nurse from the hospital rang at about 2:50 to say Jenny was out of theatre and was fine. She would be ready to come home in about an hour. I said I would be there as soon as possible.

I telephoned Rachel and arranged to collect her on the way and then set off. We arrived about 4:30 p.m.

The nurse would not allow Jenny to come home because she had not been to the loo since she came out of theatre and we waited and tried all sorts of inducements but to no avail. By 8:30 the decision was made for Jenny to stay the night in hospital and Rachel and I came home. By this time I had moved the car from the drop off/collection, free car-park to the multi-storey car-park, since the former had a 30 minute time limit.

We were home for about 9:15 and it was nearly 10:30 p.m. before we had our tea. A beer helped me round off the day.

The plan at the hospital was for me to telephone in the morning at about 9 a.m. to see if Jenny could come home.

In all the excitement, I had forgotten to pick up next week's Radio Times to put in the recordings for next week!

Friday, 31st January 2020

I was about to telephone the hospital at about 9 a.m. when the telephone rang. It was Jenny saying she was ready to come home. She had been to the loo not long after we left the previous evening but decided against calling me back to collect her that night, so the ward staff found her a bed and some night-wear.

I telephoned Matthew who had offered to give me a lift to the hospital to collect his mum, this being one of his Friday's off work. I drove down to Matthew and Carrie's house and Matthew drove to the Eye Hospital from there. Matthew waited with the car while I went to collect Jenny, free parking spaces being at a premium.

Fetching Jenny from the ward took longer than anticipated. The nurse had to explain all Jenny's medication and supervised my administration of her first treatment of the day, together with providing instructions about keeping her eye clean and protected until it healed.

We called briefly at Tesco in Prestwich. Matthew wanted a couple of items and Jenny wanted some fish for tea. I bought a copy of the Radio Times for the coming week, which subsequently proved to be missing all of the pages for the TV schedules from Saturday to Thursday inclusive.

Jenny was glad to be home and in between administering one set of eye drops every two hours and another set four times during the day in her right eye and continuing with the third medication nightly drop to her left eye, I walked across to the newsagent for a full copy of the Radio Times. It was my intention to obtain a refund from Tesco for the useless copy I purchased but it would have cost me more in fuel than it was worth to make a special journey to Bury and back that afternoon.

I spent the rest of my time putting in most of the TV recordings for the coming week.

What a busy month it had been.