

Greenmount – July 2007

First the good news. My stomach problems seem to be improving and I am managing to survive solely on 20 mg of Losec daily, not to mention good helpings of a variety of organic food and the odd bottle of Jacob's Creek.

And now the bad news. Apart from the two upper left teeth requiring fillings, I developed severe sensitivity in one in the lower left, at the back. Another emergency trip to the dentist resulted in a X-ray, revealing a crack in the tooth. Following a local anaesthetic, she drilled it and it seemed to me she was going for somewhere just below the knee because she was in there a long time with bits flying in all directions. When she came out and spoke, there was a definite echo. After mixing what seemed to be about a kilogram of cement and stuffing this in the gaping crater she had created, she smoothed it down, removed the tackle that was where my tongue normally resides and told me to rinse out. This I did and it took about five goes to clear out all of the debris.

Then came the really bad news. The crack in the tooth is far worse than WE (we?) first thought. She repaired it as best she could without exposing the nerve and asked me to see how things go.

Things didn't go well and neither did my teeth. I was back at the dentist four days later, having spat out what I thought was a piece of grit the day before. This turned out to be the temporary dressing on the broken tooth, leaving a rather large hole, which was somewhat sensitive. It took her about ten minutes to redress this, after which I mentioned that the cracked tooth at the back, lower left was causing me some pain and I was not sleeping well. She advised me to give it a day or two more.

The following day I was back again, in agony with the cracked molar. It seems the nerve was dying and was cunningly on its way to forming an abscess. She suggested removing the nerve and, if all else failed, the tooth. I asked if it was worth the effort to try to save it and she said it was, at this stage. I think she's a masochist.

Anyway, she started work on the tooth and I think removed part of the nerve. The remaining bit of it was too sensitive, even under anaesthetic and she said she would be peeling me off the ceiling (again) if she attempted to work on it. Instead, she dressed it with some sort of special material to treat the inflammation and told me to keep my scheduled appointment on 20th July. The priority then would be to complete the work on this tooth before attending to the other two, for which I shall require at least one additional appointment. Meanwhile she prescribed a week's course of antibiotics.

She should just about complete this course of work before it is time for my next check up.

Now, the antibiotics (21 250mg capsules of Amoxicillin) were on a private prescription because the dentist treats us under a private scheme, after the recent NHS reorganisation of dental practices, or, to give it its technical term, NHS Dental Catastrophe. Jenny went round to the chemist with her debit card expecting the medication to be expensive and found it was actually over £2 cheaper than it would

have been on an NHS prescription. I think that just about sums up the socialist concept of free medicine for all in this country.

Back in the chair on the 20th July, expecting this to be the end of the end of the matter, she removed the nerve and dressed the tooth. My expectations were short-lived. As I was about to depart, she handed me my jacket and told me she had inserted and antiseptic dressing. This was to finally kill off any bacteria and infection prior to root filling the tooth, for which I needed a further appointment. For the rest of the day I was reduced, once more, to sipping soup through a straw.

Meanwhile, on a more practical front, I have removed the shoddy brickwork where the old boiler vent used to be at the back of the garage, bricked up by the British Gas fitters when the new boiler was installed and refilled it with whole bricks, properly cemented in, level with the rest of the wall. It looks as though there was never a gap there, which is more than can be said for my tooth.

I have installed the outside tap, mounted on the new brickwork, in preparation for altering the plumbing for repositioning the washer, dishwasher and sink.

The next step is to put the clothes dryer into the corner of the kitchen, adjacent to the back wall. I need to do this to make sure the vent to the outside is in the correct position and lines up with the vent on the side of the dryer. It will also then enable me to more accurately estimate the position of the washer and sink so I know where to install the plumbing.

The very bad weather and teeth have prevented me from making more rapid progress since the brickwork, tap and vent all require work on the outside.

About the middle of the month we started receiving frequent visits from a very timid, undernourished, black, female cat. Since it was devouring bread we had put out for the birds, as opposed to our cats, which devour the birds (when they can catch them – not that we encourage that sort of thing), we decided to feed it. It took several days for it to come close enough to be stroked and a couple of days more before it came inside. Since then, it has hardly been outside and has taken up residence in the conservatory.

While our cats have not taken too kindly to the intruder, they seem to accept it. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the newcomer, which even hisses at its own reflection.

Apart from being thin and starving, we think it has a urinary tract infection and we had to take it to the vets. One injection, a worming tablet and four lots of tablets to treat the infection later and £35 lighter, we got the animal back home and attempted to give it the first two tablets.

Being somewhat expert at this, having given our cats several tablets, we did not expect much difficulty. How wrong can you be? It might only have four legs but it's got a hell of a lot of claws and they're sharp. It also knows how to keep its mouth shut, which is more than can be said for a lot of people. Sheer brute force and determination (on our part, not the cat's) eventually won through.

Unfortunately, the visit to the vets delayed our intended early morning start of our journey to Sheffield to collect Jen's brother and his wife for another short stay. On the way there, chewing gum demolished the temporary filling in my upper left sixth for the second time, although not seriously enough to cause me any severe discomfort and I hoped it would remain so until my next appointment on the following Friday.

The following Monday (23rd), we all went to take a look at the location Matthew and Carrie have chosen for their wedding, Ribby Hall, near Blackpool. We have booked the Friday and Saturday nights (18th and 19th July) next year before the rush starts. We then went on for a very pleasant afternoon in St Anne's-on-Sea.

Monday evening saw the resurrection of the Heavy Thinkers quiz team (yes, that's us) at the local Bull's Head and we managed to scrape 21 out of 25, thanks largely to Wilf's wife, Ann, who is very good at that sort of thing. If I'd not been so eager to declare Otis' uplifting invention of the bra instead of the lift, we would have secured 22 points. I can't imagine what was on my mind.

Things started to go a little downhill after that.

On Wednesday, we took Ann and Wilf back to Sheffield with the intention of making visits to several people. The next stop was to assist Pamela's daughter with sorting out her finances following the settlement of the estate and I left Jenny to deal with that while I dropped off the latest version of the Family History CD at a cousin's house. I returned to discover that the Nat West Bank had been most uncooperative, blocking all attempts to transfer funds elsewhere. I was quite annoyed and I shall now have to deal with Nat West. If you have investments with Nat West, my advice is to look elsewhere.

I did intend calling at my sister's (Barbara's) home to carry on the good work configuring her new computer but the lateness of the day, this incident with Nat West and the closure of the Snake Pass during the week for repairs all produced an element of disappointment and we made our way home to a late tea of fish and chips.

Another visit to the dentist on 27th resulted in the filling of the chipped tooth and another cavity in the upper left, so that work is now complete and the root filling in the rear lower left remains to be done on 24th August. I can't say I'm not receiving my value out of the private contract, even if it does hurt.

My stomach problems having subsided, I decided to cancel my appointment at the hospital for 31st July. A few days after doing so, the symptoms returned, so either it's psychological or it is something serious and intermittent. And on that cheerful thought, I shall end this month's update.