

Greenmount – July 2010

Although the month started on the 1st, as they usually do, the first event worth reporting was the final walk in the series of exploring local footpaths in the evening of Friday 2nd July.

After a gruelling day's grocery shopping, we actually managed to stay awake for what was a very pleasant, warm evening with a good amount of sunshine as we walked up through Redisher Wood and the steep climb to the ridge above, following the narrow, overgrown path along it to Higher Ridge Farm, now a ruin with just the foundation stones marking the layout of the small house. From there, we descended to the valley bottom, passing Middle Ridge Farm, also a ruin, across the stream and up to Simon's Sundial Cottage, the subject of a restoration project proposed by the Holcombe Moor Heritage Group, which is currently trying to raise funds to purchase it from the MOD (the area is part of an army training ground) in order to turn it into a field centre. From there we headed for the Greenmount Golf Club and followed the path across the golf course back to our starting point, The Old School.

On arriving home, about 8:30, we had tea. That is, we had a cup of tea and shared a pizza, before collapsing in a heap. We went off to bed and left the heap until morning.

Saturday, 3rd July was another early start and Jenny and Rachel went off to Scout Camp just after 8 a.m. to Ashworth Valley (between Bury and Rochdale) for a day with the Beavers. I spent yet another day grovelling on the patio removing weeds from the block paving, leaving off just long enough to cook my own lunch (yes, I can cook when I have to) and eat it (yes, what I cook is edible).

Jenny and Rachel returned home about 8 p.m., by which time I had showered, before which I was competing with the compost bin, changed and, for good measure, splashed around the Paco Rabanne. They changed out of their uniform and we dashed off to the Bull's Head for yet another late tea. An hour and a half later, we crawled back home and collapsed once more in a heap. We hadn't tidied it from the previous night.

On Sunday 4th July, we were up early again. Jenny and Rachel disappeared off to Church Parade with the Beavers about 9:30 and I did my Davros impression, sitting at my desk in front of the computer for about an hour or so. I have updated my web site (www.networking-consultancy.com), adding more humour and the village web site (www.greenmountvillage.org.uk). I have also started to deal with a backlog of E-mails dating back to late 2008, many of which relate to my family history project which dates back somewhat further.

I forgot to mention in last month's update that I have E-mailed my our MP again, this time to petition for the registration of Herbal Practitioners by the DoH before European legislation prevents them from prescribing many common herbal remedies when it takes effect in April 2011. So far, I have not had a reply. No doubt my MP finds this is a bitter pill to swallow.

We have started soft-fruit picking. The first crop is of the golden raspberries. There are plenty of them but much of the fruit seems to become infected or go bad on the

branch as it ripens and I can't work out why. Jenny doesn't like golden raspberries and since I'm the only one who eats them, I'm thinking of removing the bush and replacing it with more red ones. That is not going to be as easy as it sounds because it has become entangled with the blackberry and has propagated itself (it's legal between consenting plants) on the common land at the other side of the fence.

Also on the common land, the gooseberry bush I planted and cut back because it seemed infected, seems to have recovered well and has a good crop of healthy gooseberries. Now there's a surprise. To date we have found no young children under it. Unfortunately, we don't eat gooseberries either.

On 5th July, I had occasion to use the separate, small toilet. On this activity I shall not dwell further. Suffice it to say that as I exited, the glass door knob from the inside was still in my hand.

On 7th July, I walked to meet Jenny as she finished her morning crossing patrol and we went into Ramsbottom, shopping. I purchased some superglue and, with the wisdom of foresight (see later), some superglue releasent. Since we could not find everything we wanted, we went into Bury, where I stopped off at B&Q to purchase a new outside tap to replace the one at the back. The existing tap would not turn off after Rachel last washed her car and I have had to temporarily isolate the supply to the outside tap and the back-up washer in the garage. Ever since then, the tap has ceased to run and has, I imagine, felt extremely lonely.

The following day, I tackled the door knob on the inside of the door to the old toilet. The standard technique I learnt, having had most of these door knobs come unstuck at one time or another, is to remove the fitting and place it on a flat surface, apply the glue and slide the door knob over the spindle to which it is attached.

On this occasion, I came unstuck, or rather quite the reverse, as I applied the runny superglue to the fitting while still attached to the door and then proceeded to slide on the handle in the hope it would hold long enough for the glue to set. It should come as no surprise that the glass knob succumbed to the gravity of the situation and fell off. Fortunately, I managed to catch it before it hit the floor, glue end first. Thank goodness that both the releasent and a copious supply of toilet roll were within easy reach.

After cleaning up the mess and making sure I still had eight fingers and two thumbs working independently of each other, I pressed the knob on the spindle again and held it firmly in place until I could wedge a towel between it and the wall behind the door. With the door wedge underneath the door to prevent it moving and the knob now unable to move, I left the glue to set for a good twenty-four hours.

I turned my attention to the outside tap. I removed the old tap only to discover I did not have the half-inch rubber washers I needed to seal the connection between the tap and the fitting into which it screws. Unable to proceed and just out of sheer curiosity, I decided to dismantle the old tap to try to discover why it did not work properly. The built-in, non-return valve had broken and a small piece had wedged between the tap washer and the seat. It was obviously damaged beyond repair and has been consigned to the scrap heap.

On Thursday evening, I was seconded as helper and photographer for the two-hour Beaver outdoor activity of pond dipping in Redisher Wood. The warm, dry spell has resulted in very low water levels and the stream that feeds the pond was almost dry and the pond itself very low. Despite this, there was sufficient water for the Beavers to catch lots of interesting creatures, under the direction of the local ranger, Anna Cocker and to ensure they went home happy, soaked and with wellies full of dirty, smelly water. I think the parents who accompanied us enjoyed themselves just as much as the children, without the embellishment of the ritual soaking.

It was Friday morning before I acquired the washers I needed and completed the repair of the outside tap, just in time for the commencement of the hose-pipe ban, preventing me from using the tap anyway. C'est la vie.

Friday evening was the Scout Group Activity night in Old Kays Park, just up the road to Tottington and, once again, my services as photographer were called upon. The theme for the games was the world cup and there were several teams, each comprising a mixture of Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. Jenny was in charge of the England team and, surprisingly, the England team won. On the strength of this experience, Jenny, who knows nothing about football, is now applying for the England manager's job. Let's face it, she couldn't do any worse than Capello.

On Saturday 10th July, we met with a group of villagers to discuss a local development at the top of the Kirk Lees Trail (the old railway line, now a walkway and cycle path) where it meets Brandleholme Road, opposite the newsagent's shop. The plan is to create a village green area for meetings and activities and the ideas we all had are to be discussed with the council, which, having no money, will probably do what it does best – nothing.

I spent most of the afternoon watering the garden using the watering can, not wishing to risk a £1,000 fine for using the hose. Commercial car washes are, of course, excluded from the ban, so our politicians and privately-operated utility companies have obviously got their priorities right again.

On Sunday we had a stall at the car boot sale at Tottington High School. The weather was supposed to be cloudy with sunny periods in the morning with showers or light rain in the afternoon, with strong gusts of wind. We arrived about seven o'clock and set out our stall to darkening clouds. Business was slow as a brief shower saw everyone rushing to put their electrical goods under cover. Afterwards, trading was poor as the temperature dropped and the wind picked up. Not until we were packing up at about noon did the sunny periods mature. Our profit on the day was about a third of our usual taking and even though there were plenty of traders in the school yard, there were no real crowds of shoppers.

The rain forecast for the afternoon never arrived, which was fortunate because there was the annual, open-air music event in the park at Tottington called, would you believe, Music in the Park. Sadly, we did not go because we were too tired and had to unpack the car and tidy the garage.

The following week was a bit of a bummer in as much as I was plagued with discomfort in the nether regions. The cause of this I can only conjecture; a change in

diet, cold from weeding the block paving, a resurgence of my benign prostatic hyperplasia (it sounds better than it is)? Who knows?

This did not stop us enjoying the occasion of Rachel's graduation ceremony at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester on the 13th July when she received formal recognition of her M Sc degree in Forensic Psychology and the award of the Wilden Forensic Prize, whatever that is.

Also during the week, Jenny managed to lose the near-side wing mirror on the car on her way to work. She found it lying in the road next to one from a BMW. She cannot recall seeing a BMW in the vicinity, which probably explains the incident. The cost of replacing the mirror was just over £30.

The new shopping mall on The Rock in Bury opened on the 16th. We went grocery shopping. That should give some idea of the importance we attach to the new monstrosity. Bury used to be a market town. The new, towering development transforms it into a down-market town – a sort of town with a complex.

My desk-top computer once again suffered the effects of a power glitch, which also affected the web and mail server. The latter, being a nice, quiet, simple machine reloaded and carried on as though nothing had happened. Not so my large, complicated machine on which I rely a great deal. It was back to its old trick of telling me that the CPU was unrecognisable or had been changed and refused to reload until I pressed the F1 button. The last time this happened, you will recall, if you are keeping up with this endless saga, I ended up rebuilding Windows – twice.

On this occasion, I reloaded the BIOS settings to their optimised defaults, changed the amount of memory allocated to my graphics card to the maximum, which it requires and reloaded. That seems to have fixed the problem. I have now made a list of the BIOS settings (all seven pages of them) on my computer in case it will not load in the future. For those of you who have spotted the flaw in this strategy, I have also printed a copy and put it in a safe place. No doubt I shall forget where.

On Sunday 18th July, we had planned to do yet another car boot sale but, being a typical July, it has rained fairly solidly since the local water authority introduced its hose-pipe ban. The forecast is yet more rain for most of the coming week, marking the beginning of the school holidays.

We took Matthew and Carrie out to The Jewel in the Crown in Bury for an Indian meal, joined by Rachel and Carrie's parents, Bob and Marie. We have heard mixed reports of the establishment and approached it with some reservation – a table for seven. The meal seemed alright, although I've had better at the Eastern Eye in Ramsbottom and the India Gate at Turton, the service was excellent and the price very reasonable.

Then, about one o'clock in the morning, even four teaspoons of Gaviscon could not prevent the inevitable eruption, almost on a scale to match that which grounded all civil aircraft in England for several weeks. Whether this was due to my acrobatics in the loft, earlier in the day, clearing out the junk for the next car boot sale, my missing a stomach-acid-queenching tablet on the previous day because I had forgotten to

collect a new batch from the chemist or something I ate at the restaurant I'm not sure. Suffice it to say, I shall not be taking the risk again.

We spent Monday 19th tidying up the junk from the loft we had piled in the dining area and I cut another three logs off the old tree stump, donated for my fire by a kind neighbour, stocking up for the winter. Before that, it was a nice warm morning and I was thinking of cutting the grass – until the rain started again. As it was, I touched up a scratch on the car and re-affixed Rachel's Sat-nav mount to her dashboard with superglue because it had come unstuck, as she does on occasion, travelling without it.

On Tuesday 20th, we went to Sheffield to visit Jenny's brother, Wilf and his wife Anne to discuss a holiday we are planning together. Unfortunately, we did not reach any decision, except to stop off at the Heaton Park Beefeater on the way home for a very nice meal, with excellent service from a very pleasant young lady called Jackie, who has served us there before. Needless to say, my night's sleep was not interrupted.

A fine day forecast for Wednesday 21st meant that I had an opportunity to cut the grass, the back lawn being very much in need of a trim. Although the weather had been very wet for the past three weeks or so, the hover mower coped well and went on, with my assistance, to cut the front and the side – or at least half of it. It was while working under the trees that I became aware of a discrepancy between the Meteorological Office prediction and reality.

A thought occurred to me, as they sometimes do. Given the present economic crisis (aka political and financial bungling) here in England, the Government is seeking to make significant spending cuts. So, I thought, why not start with the Met Office? They rarely get the weather right anyway, so why are we wasting so much public money keeping it going?

In the evening, we went to the fourth meeting of the Greenmount Village Community in Greenmount Church. The group is making progress on a number of fronts, with village events organised in the coming months, thanks to the efforts of a few residents. It would be encouraging to see more villagers taking an interest.

The latter part of the month was fairly routine and relatively uneventful. I have switched my herbal medication for my BPH condition to *Urtica* (that's stinging nettle) due to the unavailability of Saw Palmetto tincture. It seems to be working very well, although it doesn't taste very nice and smells even worse. I am told stinging nettle is a general internal cleanser. The drains have been reinforced and the local sewage processing plant has been warned as a precaution.