

Greenmount – July 2013

The first task of the day on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July was to take in the car to have its front, near-side wheel-bearing replaced. I was going to ask the mechanic to have a look at my right shoulder as well but he was too busy.

I was back just in time to work out a strategy for getting to the Red Hall on Walmersley Road for lunch without a car, before meeting Frank and Steve in the Bull's Head car park for a lift down to Summerseat Garden Centre for a breakfast meeting to discuss our next Offa's Dyke outing. We decided our next opportunity would be week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> July.

Steve dropped me off at Longsite Road and Jenny met me there about fifteen minutes later, my having telephoned her to let her know I had left the Garden Centre. We caught the 474 bus up to the Red Hall, where we awaited the arrival of Carrie's parents, Marie and Bob. Marie had invited us to the Senior Citizen's Lunch in return for some old dolls Jenny had given her at the Car Boot sale, the previous day. Marie had repaired them and dressed them, being collectable items from the 1950s.

We had an excellent three-course lunch with very good service for £9.95 each, Bob settling the bill. I brought back a copy of the menu and told the restaurant manager that I would put it on the village web site to advertise the Senior Citizens lunch. Bob and Marie kindly gave us a lift back to Tottington to collect our car, which saved us having to negotiate the return trip on the 472.

It wasn't long after arriving home that I fell asleep for a couple of hours and we spent the evening, as usual, watching recorded TV programmes and DVDs, punctuated by a very light tea.

I did remember to check that my pension from JLT had been paid into the bank, the result of my enquiries being that they had altered the pay date from the middle of the month to the first of the month without telling me.

The unsettled weather continued on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July and put a stop to my gardening plans. Instead I concentrated on more IT work, updating the village web site, preparing to take on the role of manager for the Naillor's Field project and dealing with E-mails.

I was back doing my Davros impression on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

For a bit of a change, we went to Ramsbottom on the bus on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July, which proved to be a most worthwhile trip, finding several, low-priced, second-hand DVDs of films I had previously recorded on my computer from the TV, in the charity shops.

In the evening, I met Donna at the Incredible Edible plot to discuss the development of the grassy area beyond it, turning it into a wild-flower garden. The plan was to rally village residents on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July to remove the grass, weeds and rubble, leaving the soil in a state to receive the seeds.

On Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July, Unicorn and Waitrose both had the pleasure of our presence and this week I even managed to grab the last Cornish pasty off the shelf for lunch at Waitrose.

I spent Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July in the back and side gardens (technically, the side is common land but I look after it much better than Bury Council does).

I was back in the front garden after Church Parade and a quick lunch on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July. The front garden is the worst of all and full of moss. The steep slope down towards the house does not help and I was of the opinion that I ought to do something with it. What I should do eluded me.

On Monday 8<sup>th</sup> July, I did intend continuing the work on the front garden but Jenny talked me out of it, which took all of ten seconds and we walked down to Bury along the old railway line in the beautiful, warm sunshine, with temperatures in the upper twenties (that's Centigrade, not Fahrenheit), which is most unusual for these parts, especially in summer and, dare I mention, most welcome.

We bought a few items, mainly for the Beavers, for their pirate theme night on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July and lunched at Leckenbys in the shopping mall. The last time we went there was with Sue and Bill (from NZ) when they first came to visit and it was called Chocoholics. The same people still run the coffee shop, only the name has changed, the prices having remained high. Still, the lunch was very nice and the service was good, generally well above the standard of your average establishment and this is one instance when you get that for which you pay or pay for that which you get, depending on your point of view. It is not for those on a tight budget, though.

We cheated and caught the bus back.

I spent most of Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July on my knees and before you reach for your copy of the Kama Sutra, let me explain that I was cleaning the patio block paving. Not satisfied with removing the weeds and moss from the gaps between the bricks, I discovered that a wire brush removes an awful lot of surface dirt. All I needed was an infinite amount of time and nice, dry, sunny weather.

I was freed from my penance on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July to go grocery shopping at Unicorn and Waitrose. We do still use Waitrose despite their business relationship with Shell and I have pointed out their lack of wisdom to them in the hope the company will desist from the "out-of-character" (if one is to believe all their press reports) alliance. It would be nice if all their employees did likewise, since their employees actually own the business.

We lunched at Summerseat Garden Centre, after which I had a brief rest before taking up position on the Nailor's Field to take charge of one of the eight bases for the Scout Group Activity Night. I was relieved, in every sense of the word, by Christine and Geoff who took over from me after about an hour, leaving me free to wander round with my camera, as usual.

On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July I went round to the Incredible Edible plot with my garden tools and trailer at about 10 a.m. Donna had requested a small group of villagers help to

create a wild flower garden on the waste land beyond the existing raised beds and my trailer was needed to fetch Alistair's rotorvator and to cart the rubbish to the tip in Bury.

After returning home for lunch, it was time to put away the trailer and tools, tidy up the garage and pack the car for the car boot sale the following day.

On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> July we were at the Ramsbottom Station Car Park for about 6:30 a.m. for a steady day's trading, a good few customers spending about £3 with us for various items. The number of customers we need has risen from 250,000 to 333,334.

We were back home for about 3:30 p.m. and it was too hot and too late to start anything significant.

The intention on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July was to commence decorating the hall. A late start and peeling vinyl wall paint in patches resulted in slow progress and we decided to go for a walk after lunch. That put an end to another lovely, warm, sunny day, except for pottering about and watering the garden for the second time in three days.

On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> July we drove up to Redcar for my sister's (Barbara's) birthday.

There was not much traffic and, despite the never-ending road works on the M62, we reached Redcar in two hours. We had a brief walk round the town and on the sea front, where there has been an extensive development of sea defences and, wait for it, a vertical pier, of which, reportedly, the local council stands (or sits), alone, in awe. There were, I was advised, plans for a more conventional pier. I was invited to go up to the viewing platform at the top of the pier, admission being free, but I did not have the time or my telephoto lens on this occasion and this must have been one of the few occasions when a Yorkshireman had declined a free invitation.

The return journey was almost as pleasant except for the seemingly ever-increasing number of drivers who insist on exceeding the speed limit and a few who passed me at speeds well into three figures. I am of the opinion that a speed limit is there for a reason and those who repeatedly do not observe it should lose both their licence and their vehicle before someone else loses their life as a result of their selfishness.

I was up early on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July for a meeting with members of Bury Council at 10:30 a.m. Unfortunately, when I checked, the meeting was not until 2 p.m.

The subject under discussion was the drainage of the village recreation area known as the Nailor's Field, which becomes waterlogged after prolonged wet weather. The middle of a hot, dry spell was, perhaps, not the best time to inspect it, given the subject matter. Nonetheless, the meeting was most constructive.

On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July, I busied myself with continuing to remove the vinyl paint from the walls of the entrance hall where it had started to peel so as not to leave any impression when it was repainted. Of course, while it came off in sheets initially, now I wanted it all off, it stuck like glue.

In the evening, I was seconded to assist with the running of the Beaver session. This was the last meeting of the summer term and the theme was Pirates. I ran the base where blindfolded Beavers had to fix the eye-patch on the pirate's face. The Beavers enjoyed the evening and were quite well behaved, so I didn't need the cat.

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July, we went grocery shopping to Unicorn and Waitrose as usual with an outward deviation to Asda at Pilsworth to see if they had any decent wine at reasonable prices. What a waste of time that was.

With Matthew and Carrie being away, we stopped briefly at Matthew's house to pick his ripe fruit for our tea and then again at Vets4pets to buy some prescription biscuits for one of our cats who has to keep her weight down. I thought of getting some.

Then it was back at Beavers for the last Friday session of the term and this time I was running the life-size board game based on Snakes and Ladders with the Beavers as the counters. Once again, the Beavers enjoyed the evening and the cat was quite relieved.

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July we were up at 5 a.m. for a car boot sale in the Bull's Head car park at 7 a.m. Trading varied from quiet to non-existent and we took only £13 in the three-hour sale, which left us with £8 profit after having pre-paid for the pitch. Since proceeds went to Bury Hospice, we were not particularly concerned but there were lessons to be learned if this was to be repeated.

We came home, unpacked the car and went off to Summerseat Garden Centre for lunch to boost our stamina, which takes some doing as one matures in life. I have found that beer and wine usually help for a limited period but not in the middle of the day.

After lunch, we nipped into Ramsbottom for a potter round and I managed to find one DVD (Total Recall) for just 99p. Morrison's wine was even dearer than Asda's and I remarked to an assistant filling up the shelves how expensive decent wine has become in this country and how I used to be able to buy wine in New Zealand for the same sum in dollars over there as in pounds over here and, at the time, there were three dollars to the pound. If you've managed to work that out, it was a third of the price over there. And, for all I know, it probably still is. So who's pocketing the profit, I ask myself. Well, the government isn't doing too badly out of it for a start and it wouldn't be so bad if they put the money to good use.

And so to Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July and the car boot sale in Ramsbottom. This was a more successful day of trading with us managing to sell some items that had been on the stall for a little while, including a pair of all-leather, men's, brown, Loake shoes, size 9½, for the bargain price of £20.

On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July, I was preparing for my three-day trip to Wales, continuing the walk of Offa's Dyke with Mike, Frank and Steve.

We left for Wales at 5:45 a.m. on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July and were walking from Llangollen by 08:30 a.m. It took us about 8 hours to cover the 14½ or so miles to Racecourse Common at Oswestry and we spent the evening in the Oswald's Cross pub by the Premier Inn before retiring to our rooms at the Travel Lodge for the night.

An early start on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July from Racecourse Common and another 14 or so miles saw us at the Four Crosses pub in Four Crosses village before 5 p.m. We were hoping to refresh ourselves there before returning to the Oswald's Cross pub for an evening meal and Travel Lodge for the night but both pubs in Four Crosses village were closed. What made matters worse was that people from the Golden Lion were sat at the back of the pub, telling us the pub was closed while supping beer. Not a bit like Bodfari, where the landlord of the Downing Arms actually opened up just to serve us with a refreshing drink at the end of our hard day's walk.

We were back at the Four Crosses Pub on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July and walking by about 9:15 a.m. for a more leisurely stroll to Buttington, covering the 7 miles in just under four hours, having twice been delayed en-route by cattle that had strayed onto the path and past which I had to lead the way, my three co-walkers providing moral support from a safe distance. One of the cattle turned out to be a young bullock and he appeared to be more terrified of me than I of him. I must admit I have a great liking for cattle and a great deal of respect for the adult male of the species.

We had a pleasant lunch at The Green Dragon before departing for home.

We went shopping on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July and our first port of call was the Trafford Centre to find Jenny a new skirt to go with her several new tops and a pair of walking sandals. We were partially successful in that Jenny found two skirts in Marks and Spencer and yet another new top made from organic cotton in Debenhams. The sandals that looked promising in Clarks were too small and they did not have a larger size. Nor could they check to see if they could obtain them because their Internet connection was down.

We also bought two new pillows to complement the four we already had for our bed from John Lewis.

Having spent more than expected thus far, we made our way to Unicorn and then to Waitrose at Broadheath, where we lunched and reached home about 5 p.m.

On Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July, I decided to tidy up the back garden before the rains came and, following that, attempted a repair of one of Jenny's car boot tables for the third time.

It was my intention to recommence the decoration of the entrance hall on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July but Rachel put a stop to that by slipping down the bottom five steps of the stairs, bringing with her one of the pictures from the staircase wall, breaking the glass. Fortunately, that was all Rachel broke and the glass did no harm. Matters took a turn for the worse when Rachel collapsed, almost into unconsciousness and I had to call an ambulance. Four hours in A&E at Fairfield General Hospital thankfully confirmed Rachel was alright and that she had most probably just fainted. Afterwards, I thought it was most likely due to the shock from the fall, although, at the time, it was most worrying.

I have to say that the lady with whom I spoke on the end of the 999 call was most helpful and reassuring, staying on the line until the ambulance arrived and that the ambulance crew were very good indeed. The medical team at the hospital were also excellent, my only criticisms being the amount of waiting time and the unhelpful

receptionist who did not direct us to our daughter immediately on our arrival, after she had been brought in by the ambulance crew. It was only with advice from another patient that we located Rachel.

I made up for the loss of the day's work on Monday 29<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> July, most of which were spent in the Pink Hole of Greenmount, aka our Entrance Hall, preparing the pink walls and white paintwork for redecoration, the walls in a more sensible colour. By the end of this time, I had sanded everything down and filled the holes. It only remained to smooth down the newly plastered bits, wash everything with sugar soap and commence painting.

Two major decisions still outstanding were, firstly, whether to fit coving in the entrance hall and whether or not to remove the radiator, the latter certainly making decorating much easier and probably life much more difficult. One decision I did make was to put off making any further decisions until the following day, so, if you want to find out whether or not I removed the radiator and, if so, in so doing I deployed the appropriate tactics, tools and language while removing it, you will need to read next month's exciting instalment.