

Greenmount – June 2010

June, this year, commenced rather uneventfully, with another warm spell and much activity outside, including lunch and snoozing on the patio.

I have dressed (removed the old mortar from) all the old house bricks that were stacked on the patio at the back and moved them into a corner of the garage. Jenny has helped me to move the 350 patio bricks we had left over and which were stacked in two piles, one at the front of the garage and one on the back patio and these are now laid, three deep, underneath the trailer, on the floor in front of the freezer, in the garage. That is to say, I managed to manoeuvre and lift the trailer onto the bed of bricks after putting them on the garage floor. As a result, we now have a clear view of the fence at the end of the patio on the north side of the house, or we would have if we did not normally sit with our back to it.

The web site for the Greenmount Village Community ([www.greenmountvillage.org.uk](http://www.greenmountvillage.org.uk)) I have developed and which I host has made it into the Google search engine. If you search for Greenmount Village it comes up as the second hit (Home), although Google initially confused it with the web site for Tottington District Civic Society which I have yet to design. You will find some photographs (Picture Gallery) of the village on the web site as well as a list of one-off events and recurring activities. If you decide to view any of the pictures (shown as miniatures or thumbnails on the web site) by clicking on them, please be aware that some of them are very large and may take a long time to download. I know the feeling.

On Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June, there was still no sign of the replacement graphics card for Jenny's laptop I had purchased on E-bay despite a message from the seller (known as breakingcodes) on 27<sup>th</sup> May telling me it was on its way. I sent the seller a message to suggest he should contact his courier to find out where it was and asked him to let me know what he discovered.

In the evening, we went on the first of the four planned walks for Friday evenings during June, organised by the Scout Fellowship, to explore local footpaths. (Actually, just to confuse everyone, there was no walk on the 11<sup>th</sup> June due to another scout activity, so the fourth June walk is actually on 2<sup>nd</sup> July). The route took us over the golf course, across Bolton Road, along paths across fields to the north of Bolton Road, back down into Hawkshaw village, back across Bolton Road, down to [Two Brooks Valley](#), more significantly, up the other side of the valley, along little-used and overgrown paths, back down to the valley and up (Christine, who leads these walks, likes up) the other side to Hollymount and back past the Greenmount Golf Club, across the golf course, towards our starting point, The Old School. The walk lasted about two hours and was well attended on a lovely, sunny evening. Luckily, Jenny and I also lasted two hours.

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> June, we went to see Matthew and Carrie and chat about Matthew's recent trip on his motorcycle to Spain and France. They are off to Cyprus later in the year and have an excursion to Cairo planned. They have both recently purchased bicycles and are spending a good deal of time riding them, no doubt firming up their tender parts in preparation for the camels.

We packed the car ready for the car boot sale at Bury FC on the following Sunday and rose at 5:30 a.m. to grey skies. Nonetheless, we breakfasted and set off in preparation for the morning's trading only to meet spots of rain as we approached Bury. A quick U-turn saw us back home in about ten minutes, Jenny feeling very disappointed.

Second prize was attendance at Church Parade with her Beavers.

Later in the day, we unpacked the car again.

On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June, the replacement graphics card for Jenny's laptop arrived, postmarked 4<sup>th</sup> June, which is odd because the chap who sent it (breakingcodes on E-bay) told me it was on its way on 27<sup>th</sup> May. I eagerly unpacked it, grabbed the lap top, donned my earthing wrist strap and proceeded to replace the old card that only works in raw VGA mode instead of the normal graphics mode with the ATI drivers.

It soon became apparent that the old card was in better condition than the one that has just cost me £67. In VGA mode, I was seeing thick, light-blue, vertical lines on the screen and that's before the evening tittle. Matters did not improve when I loaded the proper ATI drivers. The thick, light-blue, vertical bands turned into thin vertical bands of thin, dark-blue, horizontal lines, until Windows XP decided enough was enough and gave me a blue screen with a very rude message about a catastrophic failure.

Now, my experience of trying to replace this graphics card has led me to believe that the ATI Radeon Mobility X700 graphics card is somewhat temperamental and coloured vertical lines on the screen are not unusual in a card that has failed. In this particular case, the card was advertised on E-bay as "working" and, giving the seller, breakingcodes, the benefit of the doubt, I can only assume that it has been damaged during removal, while in storage or during transit. In any case, I requested return and refund instructions.

The fault with my existing graphics card is intermittent and, after refitting it, the card did work properly for a short while before my having to revert to the more crude method of operation, resulting, once again, in the loss of some functionality. This is not unusual in men of my age.

I can now understand why ATI was taken over, why AMD, who took over ATI, doesn't want to know and why Fujitsu want to charge £250 for a brand new card. These cards are so unreliable that there are very few working ones around and Fujitsu seems to have most of them. Well, I've got news for Fujitsu. The best place for the cards and the lap top is the skip at the local tip, along with ATI, AMD and Fujitsu.

On 12<sup>th</sup> June I received a message from the seller of the replacement card, brakingcodes, suggesting that I return it and I would be given a refund once it had been tested (whatever that meant) and I finally made it to the post box on 17<sup>th</sup> June.

We missed the Friday evening walk on 18<sup>th</sup> June because I did not feel very well and slept for most of the day, staying awake, fortunately, just long enough to drive Jenny to the stores for the weekly grocery shop.

On 20<sup>th</sup> June, we attempted another car boot sale at the home of Bury FC, Gigg Lane. This time, the weather was good but it seems that somebody gave us the wrong date and only we and one other couple turned up to find locked gates.

Plan B was immediately invoked (you can't beat a Plan B) and we headed for the car boot pitch in Ramsbottom. There were still a few places left at 7:15 a.m. and we quickly grabbed one of them. As it turned out, we had a good, if somewhat long, day, finishing about 3:00 p.m., the car being considerably lighter, the weight of goods having been replaced by the weight of coins.

While we were there, we chatted to a number of other stall-holders, including one who had traded at Bury FC. He advised against it. In his opinion, more goods are stolen than sold there. He saw an old grannie shove a DVD box set he had for sale under her coat and run for it. He was too slow to catch her. His description of the area made Daffodil Road look like part of Fulwood (that bit's in for them as cums from Sheffel).

On 22<sup>nd</sup> June, we attended the third meeting of our village community group. It was not as well attended as previous meetings and progress is slow, as one would expect with all new ventures such as this. At least I can keep pace with it.

The weather has remained hot and sunny for most of the month, so I have been grovelling (nothing new there) on the patio floor, removing weeds from the block paving and filling the gaps with kiln-dried sand during the day and squirting my hose around (bragging again) in the evenings.

There was some good news on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. A message from E-bay confirmed that my money for the faulty graphics card has been refunded so breakingcodes (aka Philip Gay) is a man of his word. I checked my credit card statement online and the credit was there a couple of days later.

I have also taken the brave step of writing to our new MP, David Nuttall, to complain about the budget proposal to increase VAT by 2.5% to 20% in January of next year and suggested that the new Government would do better to significantly increase income tax for high earners and corporation tax for highly profitable companies, thereby tackling the greed culture that led to the present crisis. Our old MP, David Chator, is facing criminal charges over his expense claims.

On 27<sup>th</sup> June we did yet another car boot sale at Ramsbottom, the advantage there being that the pitch is next to the station and the steam railway brings in visitors at intervals throughout the day, so there is a mixture of regular, local customers and new faces. Although we had no major items to sell, we still had a very profitable day. At this rate, Jenny will soon be able to retire.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> June, I installed a telephone extension socket for our new neighbours across the back. On returning, I fell asleep for a couple of hours. Following lunch on the patio, a regular occurrence throughout the month, I updated my web sites, as the weather turned cooler and showery. This is the first rain we have had for a while in Greenmount and the garden certainly needs it and it saves me a job later.

So June departs in unsettled, but warm, mode and we look forward to an eventful July, including Scout Camp, dipping the Beavers in the pond again, the last Church Parade of the term, more car boot sales, soft fruit picking and jam making. This beats working for a living.