

Greenmount – June 2016

Wednesday June 1<sup>st</sup>: The Old School telephone saga continued with a call from a cabling engineer while I was performing my usual after-breakfast routine of washing the pots from breakfast and the evening meal the day before. The engineer's van was in the village store car park and I walked round to meet the engineer, standing at the gate to the Old School entrance.

I took my keys and opened up the front door, not realising that a couple of ladies were in sorting out the jumble until I met one of them in the corridor. They were using the back door.

I waited in the kitchen while the engineer checked the line and he then disappeared to investigate the fault further, saying he would telephone me later. I locked the front door and left.

Jenny and I spent the morning pottering around in the back garden, generally tidying up, potting some herb cuttings and giving the tomato plants in the conservatory larger pot bases so the drainage water did not overflow.

After lunch, I updated my web site with the monthly updates for April and May before resuming my outdoor activities, dealing with the edges of the side garden where the grass had to be cut by hand because of the plants and checking the ivy on the garage wall again. That was quite exhausting and I came in for a shower about 4:30 p.m., after which Jenny thought I smelt much sweeter. I didn't feel so good though.

I had not heard from the BT engineer so I called his mobile. My call went to his answering service and I left a message asking him to call me with a progress report.

Thursday June 2<sup>nd</sup>: I managed to crawl out of bed about 9:30 a.m. I was literally aching all over and all through breakfast my thinking was unbelievably woolly. It seemed like an onset of the 'flu but I had no other symptoms and I hadn't had any alcohol for a couple of days. Perhaps that was the problem.

Anyway, I was much too late and in no fit state to join Steve and Mike for a stroll round the local hills and vales at 9:00 a.m. for which the weather was not unpleasant except for the cool wind, which, I had found, was usually quite welcome when walking across country.

My first task after breakfast was to telephone the BT engineer again to find out what was happening with the telephone line fault at the Old School. Again I left a message.

It struck me that I might be able to find out what was happening if I could access the BT account for the Old School online so I set about creating a user with which to do so. The engineer had cleared the fault.

I went round to the Old School to check all was well and there was still some interference on the line. I dialled 154 again and reported the fault for a third time, arranging to meet a BT engineer on the coming Tuesday morning.

While I was there I spoke with a very helpful lady in sales about Broadband prices and options. The best deal seemed to be a two-year contract, upgrading the existing line and bundling it in with the Broadband. While speaking with her, she advised me that Broadband could not be provided on this line because it had a payphone marker on the account and she asked me if it could be removed. I explained there was a payphone on the end of the line but it was not on contract with BT and I saw no reason why the account marker could not be removed. In any case, the payphone indicator proved troublesome when it came to reporting faults since payphones were handled by a different department to line faults.

It did not occur to me until afterwards that removing the payphone marker might affect the function of the payphone on the end of the line. I went back to the Old School to check and, sure enough, it was possible to make calls from the payphone without needing to insert coins. This was not a good idea for a building used as a community centre. I placed a notice on the payphone to say it was not to be used except to answer incoming calls and in emergencies because there was an ongoing line fault.

Back home, I put together costs for Broadband for the Church Elder's meeting on the coming Monday, together with a cost for replacing the payphone with a telephone without a keypad that had pre-defined numbers on buttons. The only make I could find was Interquartz. The company supplied two models, the 9281P1 and the 9281P10, both of which had no keypad and which allowed incoming calls. The P1 had one pre-programmed button to dial a specific number and the P10 had ten pre-programmed buttons. These could be purchased pre-programmed and it was possible to purchase a special programmer to do it yourself. Unfortunately, I could not find a supplier for the P10.

Friday June 3<sup>rd</sup>: We had a very pleasant trip down the motorway to Unicorn in Chorlton and arrived there just after they had opened at about 9:40 a.m. There was a fair amount of traffic on the subsequent journey down the A56 to Waitrose at Broadheath and the journey back around the M60 was dreadfully slow yet again. It would have been quicker to come back through Manchester, along the A56.

I spent the rest of the afternoon putting in the TV programmes to record for the week, not that there were many of them. To say we had the choice of over 100 TV and radio channels, the content was pretty abysmal and much of it comprised repeats. Not that I wasn't grateful for repeats, because I had managed to record several earlier series I missed the first time round. The problem was that the same repeats were repeated week after week. None of the new BBC drama appealed to me and I was of the opinion the BBC could do worse than rerun some of the more memorable and quality programmes such as *Z-Cars*, *Softly Softly*, the complete series including the pilot and all the special episodes of *Last of the Summer Wine* and so on. There were so many repeated programmes that I was thinking of not renewing my TV licence at the end of the current term. I'd simply reuse the one I had.

Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup>: We were up early and I spent the morning with Jenny at Greenmount Old School helping out with the monthly Drop-In. I was home about 1 p.m. after helping to tidy up, Jenny having returned a little earlier to prepare lunch.

I spent the afternoon packing the car and the trailer for the car boot sale the following day. The plan was to take the trailer, unpack it, dismantle it and place it in its storage

position, which on its back with the towing bar upright, on four large wheels. That brought back memories. It would be placed in front of the car, out of the way and we could then unpack the car.

I did have a little play with an ordinary telephone with three memory buttons. The plan was to store a number in the memory button and then disable the keypad. The only way of disabling the keypad was to place insulation between the digit pushbuttons and the printed circuit board underneath and by the time I had done this, the telephone naturally being disconnected from the BT socket, it had, seemingly, lost its memory. That was not an unusual experience for me.

Sunday June 5<sup>th</sup>: We were at our Car Boot pitch in Ramsbottom for 6:15 a.m. We went early (a) because it was a lovely sunny morning and the forecast was for a warm, sunny day and (b) because we took the trailer. The car was full of larger items and the trailer had our usual table-top goods and clothes in boxes.

In the event, we needn't have bothered. It was turned 3 p.m. before we had finished packing up and we had made less than half what we expected. There simply wasn't the footfall despite the nice weather and lots of stalls.

What's more, we learnt that the car boot sale had been held on the previous Sunday and the following Bank Holiday Monday, despite it being the 1940s week end on the East Lancashire Railway, when, in previous years, the station car park on which we traded had been closed. Not only was there a car boot sale but it was extremely busy and everyone who was there seemed to have done well. We were, of course, otherwise occupied anyway.

Monday June 6<sup>th</sup>: I went round to the Old School early to tell the Pre-School ladies to expect a BT engineer, having reported the telephone line faulty for the third time. On the previous two occasions, the BT engineer had logged the fault had been repaired without checking with me and it hadn't. The engineer never contacted me and the fault was still ongoing at 5 p.m. I sent a complaint in by E-mail.

I cut the grass on the back and front. That was really enough exercise in the scorching heat and I found time to complete the costs for Broadband and a suitable telephone to replace the Old School payphone, having received a quotation for what I wanted from a company called Rocom. The Elder's meeting, at which the whole issue would be discussed, was being held that evening.

Tuesday June 7<sup>th</sup>: I continued with my outdoor activities and managed to finish mowing the grass on the side of the house before lunch. I wanted to complete it before the council chap turned up again with his GT, ride-on mower. The contrast between the half I cut and the half he ploughed was like the difference between silk and coarse sandpaper. I have to say, though, that, this year, thus far, he had left alone the half I cut.

After lunch I went off to the Bull's Head for a meeting with Laura Roberts and Joani Beale to discuss the village Dementia web page. Laura, in particular, thought it was a little too busy and confusing for sufferers and I had to agree, the page having been constructed at short notice. I took away ideas and suggestions and spent the rest of the day implementing them. The draft, end product did look much neater and awaited three pieces of information, one of which would not be available until this coming Friday.

I also updated the [Tottington District Civic Society's web site](#).

Wednesday June 8<sup>th</sup>: We ventured out on what I thought was going to be a short, mid-week grocery shop, having descended from a higher plane, well, upstairs anyway, somewhat later than had recently become the norm, at about 11 a.m.

We called at the Old School to drop off some jumble and sped off to Bury. A stroll across to the health food shop in the market was followed by a visit to the pound shop next door and, as we happened to be passing Waterstones book shop on the way back to the car, Jenny decided to pop in and see if they had the Hemsley and Hemsley cookery book with recipes she had seen in their current TV series. We could not find the book Jenny wanted to browse on the shelves. We later discovered it was in full view on the table in front of the shelves. What a silly place to put it.

Jenny did find another very good gluten-free cookery book and we bought it.

The next stop was at the recycling station to drop off some old cardboard boxes and then we sped off to B&Q at Heap Bridge. My forage for DIY equipment was partially successful and we made our way to our final destination, Asda at Pilsworth.

We reached home about 3 p.m. and Jenny made lunch.

Mike called round to discuss the E-mail I had sent him about arranging a meeting to discuss the approval of the Church Elders to install Broadband at the Old School over a cup of coffee. Having turned up in shorts, T-shirt and soft shoes, he was stranded here for about an hour as the heavens opened and the road temporarily turned into a river. That gave him time for a second cup of coffee. The thunderstorm and rain went as suddenly as they had come and the sun was back out, drying up the road in no time at all.

I spent about an hour putting together an Internet access policy for the Old School in readiness for the Broadband installation and arranged a meeting with Mike as treasurer of the Old School Users Association, our minister, Andrew and Christine in her capacity as Old School Manager for 9 a.m. from the following morning to discuss the policy and agree the items I was ordering.

Thursday June 9<sup>th</sup>: As arranged, I met with Mike, Andrew and Christine at the Old School. We agreed I should order the BT Broadband Unlimited package I had been quoted as well as the Interquartz ten-button telephone and the programming keypad emulator. We also discussed the access policy and agreed some changes.

Back home, I contacted BT sales and spoke to a gentleman called Liam. I explained I wanted to order the Broadband Unlimited for Greenmount Old School. That was fine until I told him I had been quoted prices by a lady called Tammy a few days earlier. Liam's immediate reaction was that I could not have Broadband at the price Tammy quoted because it didn't qualify as an upgrade, which is what Tammy proposed. Fortunately, Liam was able to resolve the situation to arrive at the bundle total price Tammy had quoted by reducing the line rental and then crediting the account with a one-off payment to cover the difference over the 24 month contract. While I was satisfied with the result, this was yet another case of the inconsistencies that occur within BT and which totally confuse the customer. I blame the man at the top who is paid far too much money and seemingly couldn't manage the proverbial in a brewery. I was convinced I

could do a much better job of it at a fraction of the salary. One of my first tasks would be to review the salaries of senior members of staff.

I subsequently received half a dozen E-mails from BT relating to my order containing various bits of information and I left them until the following day, except for one. Liam queried the order, suggesting there might be a problem with Broadband and asking if there was a payphone on the end of the line. Where, I thought, had I heard this before. Did nobody in BT share information with anyone else? The payphone marker on the account had been removed a few days previously. I explained the situation to Liam and heard nothing more.

Placing the order for the Interquartz items with Rocom also had its highlights. Fee, with whom I was dealing at Rocom, asked if we could issue a purchase order number. I explained the order was on behalf of what amounted to a community centre. Everyone at the Old School took great pride in the principle of never committing anything to paper if it could be avoided, let alone having an ordering system.

Fee also asked if I could scan and send the Customer Credit Application Form by E-mail rather than posting the form Mike had completed at the meeting. I said I would do my best, knowing that it would be something of a challenge with my desktop PC being out of action due to the CPU overheating and the scanner being attached to it. I worked round that by installing the scanner software and drivers on Rachel's laptop and using that. I would have used the Windows 10 laptop I kept for Old School applications but there were no drivers available for the HP Photosmart 2575 All-in-One printer/scanner for anything past Windows XP. Good old XP.

Friday June 10<sup>th</sup>: Jenny woke me just after 6 a.m. I asked her why she was dressing so early and she said she had misread the clock, thinking it was 7 a.m. and, not realising her mistake until after she had washed, she saw no point in going back to bed. She obviously didn't see any point in me going back to bed either.

We left for our usual, short, grocery-shopping trip to Prestwich about 8:30, making straight for Tesco, giving Village Greens a miss this particular week. Traffic was not too bad and we were home for about 11:15. We had a quick lunch and we were bang on time at 12:15 to pick up our neighbours across the back to give them a lift to the second Dementia café at the Cricket Club, for which Jenny had baked two gluten-free cakes.

The café was well attended and our guest speaker was Dr Ann Johnson, a very nice lady who was diagnosed with Dementia a number of years previously and went around talking to audiences about her experiences. Ann was also a member of a government body to raise the awareness of Dementia.

After bringing our neighbours home, we were off again to see Carrie's parents, Marie and Bob in Ramsbottom, this being Marie's birthday and Jenny having been unable to obtain a stamp locally for her card, the village being devoid of a Post Office.

Saturday June 11<sup>th</sup>: We strolled across to the Jumbler's lunch at the Bull's head Toby Carvery at noon. This was the annual event when all those who freely donated their time to fund-raising to keep the Old School running as a village community centre and to help fund improvements to the Old School and the Church were formally thanked for all they did. We had a very nice lunch and some very pleasant company.

I spent the rest of the day finishing off the Dementia web page and publishing it on the server, together with pictures of various Dementia activities, including the photographs from the previous day.

Sunday June 12<sup>th</sup>: We had decided not to go to the car boot sale because the weather forecast was for rain, although it was not certain how much or exactly when. In the event, it rained here about lunchtime, as I was grappling with my PC overheating problem. I finally managed to resolve that, or so I thought, by relocating the tower system on the floor of the conservatory, it having previously been perched on my desk.

Monday June 13<sup>th</sup>: The new Interquartz telephone arrived for Greenmount Old School. I put it together, programmed it, labelled it and installed it. I also reconnected the internal bell set that I had disconnected when I first reported the line fault to make sure it was an external fault and not an internal one.

I reconnected the upstairs network socket, took the old payphone that wasn't a payphone any more upstairs and installed it on the network socket using the converter Mike had found and brought up earlier in exchange for two feet of wood to prop up something.

It suddenly dawned on me that I had had two successful days on the trot, something of a record, I thought.

Tuesday June 14<sup>th</sup>: An early morning call after breakfast from Christine informing me that a BT engineer was expected within the half hour saw me speeding round for about 9:30. The BT engineer had already arrived and was looking into the telephone line fault yet again. After running several tests and failing to find a fault, the engineer received corroborating verbal support for my insistence there was an intermittent problem from the ladies who ran the Pre-school sessions. Further tests did pick up a problem in the cabinet near the exchange and the engineer went off to check it, promising to contact me with the result.

On this occasion, not only did the engineer telephone me but he confirmed he had found that the line was double-jumpered in the cabinet. That is to say the line from the exchange was not only connected to the line to the Old School but also to another outgoing wire to goodness knows where. The bogus connection was quite loose, which would explain the fault being intermittent. Removing the offending connection did seem to improve matters considerably.

When I came home, I wasted about an hour sorting out a new facility from Talk Talk to allow customers to bar the last number from which a call was received. In my case it barred the last number but two and I discovered I had blocked calls from Christine's mobile and not from an international number from some idiot in Cape Verde. I spent a little while informing a chap at Talk Talk that the barring did not work properly.

After lunch, we went into Ramsbottom and I found a DVD of John Carpenter's *The Thing* for 50p and an unopened CD of Louis Armstrong's classic tunes for £2. After a brief call at Morrisons for a few groceries, we headed home.

I decided to contact BT to discuss a comment from the engineer that morning. The engineer had suggested that the noise on the line might be caused by the internal bell in

the corridor. I explained that if it were, it was on maintenance because we paid for it at a charge of £1.88 a quarter. The engineer had told me that he didn't work for BT. He worked for Openreach, a separate company owned by BT and that engineers could no longer fix faults on internal equipment. His responsibility ended at the master socket on which the external line terminated. I had asked the engineer why we were paying maintenance for something BT could not maintain and he shrugged his shoulders.

I told a lady in BT accounts I could see not reason why we should be paying for an item BT could not maintain. After much discussion, she agreed to remove it from the account and went away to check a few things. When she came back she told me that if she removed it from the account, the bell would no longer work. The payment was for a service that was required to make the internal bell ring and not for maintenance. This didn't seem to make sense to me, since the external bell was simply a telephone extension without a telephone; it was just the bell. Internal extensions functioned without any special service so why shouldn't a bell set? I decided to err on the side of caution and leave it on the account until I could speak to John Seddon, a retired BT engineer I knew.

The lady in accounts also mentioned that there was a £4 paper billing fee per bill if we did not opt for online (i.e. paperless) billing. The chap who provided me with the quotation did not mention this but, apparently, it was tucked away in the Ts and Cs.

I talked to Mike, the treasurer and started to set up paperless billing.

I decided to play with the new BT broadband router for the Old School that had arrived that morning and, after a little messing around, I managed to configure it. It was not one of the most user-friendly hubs I had used and it was somewhat lacking technically.

First, there was no facility to turn off the broadcast of the wireless network identifier (SSID). It was best to do this for a secure, private network on the basis that if other people's computers did not display the network name, a connection could not be made to it. Second, the network key for WPA2 security was limited to 63 characters. Normally I would have expected it to be 64. I created a random 63 character key which would have to be known before anyone could connect to the network, maximising security.

You will have gathered that I was not impressed by BT by this time.

I had been thinking of moving my telephone and broadband to BT Business, upgrading to fibre, with a fixed IP address for the server. After this experience, I was more likely to give my business to my existing supplier Talk Talk.

That took me up to tea time and a relaxing evening watching the DVD I had purchased.

Wednesday June 15<sup>th</sup>: Jenny wanted some more fresh air so we headed off to Bury, my having slept in well past the time I said I would try to meet up with Christine to have a look at her extension telephone at the Old School that was not working.

I dropped Jenny at Tesco and she walked across into Bury while I drove on to B&Q at Heap Bridge, heading out of Bury on the other side towards Rochdale. I found the two items for which I was looking, an MK, deep, white, surface-mounted, backing box and a plain cover. The idea was to hide the broadband filter in the box to prevent the

telephone and the router being disconnected. The filter would be plugged into the master socket in which the telephone plug was already concealed.

I met up with Jenny afterwards and we tootled round Tesco, making a few purchases.

After lunch at home, I went round to the Old School.

The first task was to sort out the extension upstairs. I started by testing the pay-telephone and it didn't work. I moved on to checking the connections to the master socket and the first problem I noticed was that the telephone engineer had not reconnected one of the wires to the internal bell set. I stripped out all the wires and remade all the connections and then went back upstairs to check the extension telephone. The old payphone that was plugged into the extension still did not work.

I decided to try the new Interquartz telephone from the kitchen in the extension upstairs and it worked perfectly. My conclusion was that either the payphone was faulty or it needed some kind of signalling from the exchange that had been removed, having had the payphone marker removed from the account. I resolved to obtain a spare telephone for Christine.

The next task was to install the preconfigured broadband router and test the wireless signal in the various rooms. I positioned the router near the master socket in the kitchen and wandered round with the laptop. I managed to maintain connectivity everywhere, although the signal strength in the hall was quite low.

I could not fit the new backing box to house the broadband filter because I had forgotten my hacksaw and my file to cut out the access holes for the cables. I left the router switched off and disconnected from the BT socket and the telephone plugged in as before.

At home again, I decided to see if I could make a spare Linksys Broadband router function as a wireless extension from an installed broadband router but its software was not flexible enough for me to be able to configure it as a bridge rather than a router, the difference being that a bridge extends the same network while a router connects two or more different networks together. It was important to have a single network throughout the Old School.

That took me up to tea time, after which my brain normally switched off and I went into video-watching mode.

Thursday June 16<sup>th</sup>: After breakfast, I prepared the backing box for mounting on the wall in the Old School kitchen. I needed to cut out three cable entries, one for the ADSL filter, one for the telephone and one for the ADSL router.

My labours were interrupted by a brief visit from Mike who brought a cheque for Rocom for the telephone that was recently purchased for the Old School.

The cutting and filing completed, Jenny and I went down to Summerseat Garden Centre to look for a present for Gwen's birthday next week.

After lunch, I went round to the Old School again to install the backing box to hold the ADSL filter in the kitchen and I wired in the telephone and the ADSL router and left the latter switched on, awaiting the broadband, due no later than midnight on 22<sup>nd</sup> June. I also tidied up the wiring to the telephone socket that had literally been hanging around for ages. I finished about the same time as Jenny finished her yoga session and we came home for a quick cup of tea before whizzing off to the post office to send off the cheque and a short covering letter I had composed while sipping my tea to Rocom.

On the way back, we called at the Old School with a telephone from Jenny's car boot stock for Christine in the upstairs room as a temporary measure until I could replace it with one from the Old School jumble that had caller display on it.

I was looking forward to a nice relaxing evening.

Friday June 17<sup>th</sup>: I woke about 6:30 a.m. and since the alarm was set for 7 a.m., I thought I might as well get up. By the time Jenny came down, the pots from the previous evening were washed, dried and put away and breakfast was being prepared.

We left about 9 a.m. and arrived in Chorlton about 9:40 a.m., searching for Chorlton (Plant) Nursery, which was extremely well hidden in the middle of a housing estate. We found it five minutes before it opened at 10 a.m. and purchased some lettuce, French beans and spinach, all organic, ready for planting in our second raised bed.

We made it to Unicorn before the rush and, despite the road works approaching Broadheath restricting two lanes of busy traffic to one, to Witrose for just after noon.

Our trip home was not too unpleasant, with stretches of the M60 almost bringing us to a halt. We passed through Bury before parents were rushing around to collect their children who had forgotten for what they were given legs from school.

While I was on the M60, I received a mobile telephone call which Jenny answered. A lady called to say the telephone ringing at the Old School was not loud enough and not as loud as it used to be before all the recent developments. She wanted to speak to me but Jenny explained I was driving and unable to take the call. I relayed the message that I would look into the problem the following day and let the pre-school manager know the outcome.

Jenny put away the groceries while I beavered away configuring the computer to record the few watchable TV programmes for the week that were not repeats and which I did not already have. I was interrupted by Jenny asking me to help her to plant out the morning's purchases.

I completed my task after tea and settled down to watch the King's Speech on DVD.

Saturday June 18<sup>th</sup>: Another reasonably early start, quick, cool shower and breakfast put me in the perfect mood for a day of testing and pricing electrical jumble at the Old School.

There was an initial deviation from my planned day in as much as I had to check the telephone system for the pre-school group. It was working perfectly, except that the ring tone level on the new telephone was not at its loudest setting. I increased the volume and

I adjusted the pitch to the highest available, although it didn't seem to make much difference.

We were home for about 4 p.m. and I spent an hour and a half dealing with various bits of administration relating to the Broadband, keeping Mike and Janice from pre-school informed.

Then it was time to pack the car for the following day's car boot sale in Ramsbottom and we finished that task at about 7:30. That meant a late, quick tea before settling down for the evening and an early night.

Sunday June 19<sup>th</sup>: The alarm went off at 4:30 a.m. and a quick wash in cold water rendered me almost *compos mentis*. We were at our pitch in Ramsbottom for 6:45 a.m. and the day was almost a waste of time. We made less than the last time. Trading was so bad that we started thinking about looking for a different location.

We packed up about 2 p.m. because rain was scheduled for 3 p.m. and it had already started to make its presence felt in the wind. We had to be home before 4 p.m. in any case since Matthew was coming to visit.

Carrie dropped off Matthew and went to see her parents. It was father's day. Matthew brought me a really nice card and some very nice beer. We chatted until Carrie rejoined us and they went back home to feed their cat, Penny.

Jenny and I dressed for the evening and I tended Jenny's tomato plants in the conservatory while we waited for Rachel to join us. Rachel brought me another very nice card and we all went off to Owens restaurant in Ramsbottom, this being Rachel's treat.

We had a reasonable meal. Jenny and Rachel's main courses were a bit on the scant side, so much so that we checked the bill later to see whether they had been served the smaller portion. My main course had plenty of meat and could have done with more vegetables. Also, the Chardonnay Jenny and I drank was not one of the better ones I had tasted and I thought fell well short of our usual Yellow Tail Chardonnay.

Monday June 20<sup>th</sup>: After the previous long day, we didn't exactly leap out of bed at the crack of dawn. After a late, leisurely breakfast, washing the pots and helping Jenny tidy up her herb raised bed, I started tidying up the garage and Jenny came out to help unpack the car from the previous day's trading. When we had finished, I decided to sort the spare power supplies into various boxes based on their voltage and found two I needed, one for a telephone and one for a VGA flat screen monitor, both items from Jenny's car boot stock. I finished off the task after a break for lunch and brought in the two items for testing while Jenny went off to take the Monday Beaver session in Ellen's absence, she being on holiday for two weeks.

The telephone worked except for the 13-number memory and since I couldn't find a manual for it online, I decided to consign it to the junk pile.

The monitor also worked when I connected it to the server and, since it had built-in speakers, I decided to connect up the sound. It was then I discovered the sound card in the server had no drivers.

Attempting to find the drivers automatically, I drew a blank. I decided to shelve that problem for another day and, instead, resurrected another server problem, the renewal of the anti-virus software.

When I connected to the automatic renewal page, it took me straight to the page and I started to enter my details for a twelve month licence. Tea interrupted that exercise and afterwards I settled down to watch a recording of "I Know What You Did Last Summer".

Tuesday June 21<sup>st</sup>: Another fun-packed day loomed. After breakfast, we went to deliver the latest issue of our village newsletter, [Greenmount Voice](#) to the houses on our round.

We called at Frank and Gwen's house on the way to drop off Gwen's birthday present. There was no-one in. A mobile phone call to Gwen established they were abroad on holiday. Jenny came home with Gwen's bag of bits while I carried on with Plan A and Jenny joined me later.

With all the copies of the newsletter safely in the letterboxes of the unsuspecting residents, we headed down Brandlesholme Road, towards Bury with the intention of catching a bus to Crosstones, just this side of Bury town centre, where we wandered round the relatively new B&M store. We found a few items of interest and made a mental note to call on Friday when we went grocery shopping.

We walked on to the post office depot, just off Bolton Road, to collect a parcel that the postman was unable to deliver a couple of days earlier because no-one was in to accept it.

The next bus back to Greenmount was some twenty minutes away and we decided to hop on the 474 that arrived, taking us to the bottom of Vernon Road, a good ten minute walk from home.

By the time we reached home we were ready for lunch and Jenny took care of that while I unpacked the parcel of spares for the Bosch fridge-freezer, put them together and fitted them, which took all of ten minutes.

I managed an update of the Tottington District Civic Society's web site before lunch and went out and cut the grass on the side garden afterwards.

The grass was quite long and, after the previous day's heavy rain, quite wet, making it difficult to cut and making a mess of the mower. Despite the heavy going and a pile of dog dung I had to move, I had finished the job, cleaned the mower and tidied everything away by 5 p.m.

It was time to wind down with a cup of tea before a good shower and the evening meal.

Wednesday June 22<sup>nd</sup>: The plan was to continue tidying up the garden after breakfast. The onset of nausea before and a touch of the Leon's during and after breakfast slowed me down somewhat, except when heading for the bathroom.

I finished off an update to the village web site I had started the previous evening, immediately before retiring, before breakfast and subsequently relaxed, finishing my second cup of tea. While doing so, I checked my E-mail and discovered that our local

Conservative M.P., David Nuttall, who I have come to know through the village activities, was in favour of leaving the E.U., as was I. This was one of those rare occasions where we were in complete agreement.

I recovered sufficiently to wash the pots and then decided to trim the edges of the side garden, having cut the grass the previous day. When I started to use the trimmer, it spewed out the line and the reel cover flew off, rapidly followed by the spool. It took me all morning and three attempts to repair it and I still didn't really know what caused the problem. All I did was squirt WD40 into the automatic line feed mechanism, play about with the small spring that provided the tension for the line feed mechanism and shorten the line that was wound on the spool.

I managed to trim the edges and mow the front garden before lunch, during which it went quite dull. I relaxed for a short while after lunch and took the opportunity to check my E-mail again. BT had completed the broadband at the Old School and I needed to go and check it was working.

After lunch, I cut the grass on the front and back, cleaned the mower and put it away. I decided to cut the prickly hedge between our front Garden and the one next door and was preparing to use the hedge trimmer when it started to rain, not that any was forecast. I gave up, packed up and went round to the Old School to check the broadband. That was working fine.

I came home and started to look into the driver required to make the sound work on the server. It turned out that the Realtek audio was built into the motherboard and I established that was a Foxconn 45CM/GM.

After tea, I downloaded the drivers from Foxconn, installed them and tested the sound, which worked alright after a couple of server reloads.

I thought I might as well download all the drivers for the motherboard from Foxconn and save them in case I needed them in the future, even though the essential ones had been available from Microsoft when the operating system, Windows 2003 Server, had been installed. There were a couple of devices on the system still without drivers.

My last couple of tasks were to download the network monitoring software from Colasoft and to reboot the server again when all network communication with it was lost during the late evening.

Thursday June 23<sup>rd</sup>: Following the morning's routine chores, I started my working day by helping Jenny cover up her spinach and lettuce plants in the raised bed because something had been eating the leaves on a couple of them. We use some old, transparent, plastic covers from seed cultivators that Matthew gave us. This was a temporary measure until we could obtain something better.

I trimmed the back lawn and, with Jenny's help, tied up the drooping raspberry bushes that were laden with fruit for ripening.

Matthew arrived somewhat later than expected. He was leaving his car with us for two weeks while he and Carrie went to France on holiday. He had dropped off the cat at the cattery and I gave him a lift home.

I resumed work on the back borders, hoeing and weeding and, of course, cleaning the cat's latrine, the latter being something that Jenny had taken to doing when I didn't.

I turned my attention to the side garden at the front and started tidying up the border by the drive until the early lunch was ready at 11:45. Following lunch and a brief rest, we drove down to the Cricket Club to vote in the EU referendum and I dropped Jenny off at the Old School for her yoga session on the way back.

I came home, acquired the items I needed for working on the Incredible Edible plot and set off to meet Dave Archer at 2 p.m. for a couple of hours hard labour in the lovely sunshine.

In the event, we spent just over an hour weeding because Dave had to be back home just after 3 p.m. and we agreed to meet again the following Thursday at the same time.

I came home, put the rubbish in the bin, and stored away the tools I had used at the plot just as Jenny returned from yoga. We had a cup of tea and contemplated taking a shower before the evening meal.

Friday June 24<sup>th</sup>: The short shopping spree (try saying that after a few pints) turned out to be quite a long session.

We should have called at B&M at Crosstones, on the way through Bury but being on auto-pilot, I sailed past the turning. The plan was to purchase a few bargain items we had seen on Tuesday.

Jenny reminded me we were heading to Asda at Pilsworth and I managed to remember to turn off the A56, rejoining it later to reach Village Greens at Prestwich, the local alternative to Unicorn at Chorlton. Unfortunately, Village Greens was too warm for fresh produce and much of it was not at its best. I said they could do with air conditioning and the response was that it was too expensive and they didn't know how long they would be there. I hoped that the local co-operative was not suffering from the lack of trade, although it was a catch-22 situation. If the produce was in poor condition, they may not attract the number of customers to be profitable and if they did not have the income to pay for and maintain air conditioning, they would not attract the amount of trade they needed.

From our modest purchases there, we headed to Tesco and lunched at Costa Coffee. It was about 3:30 p.m. when we arrived home and I settled down to put in the TV programmes for the week.

Saturday June 25<sup>th</sup>: We planned to work on the electrical equipment that needed testing and pricing for the jumble sale at the Old School, expecting it to take about half the day. In the event, we were there from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. One of my first tasks was to configure Faith's laptop and tablet to access the wireless broadband network which took a good half hour.

We decided to eat at the Bull's Head Toby Carvery in the village and strolled across to find the pub quite busy. It was nice to see so many people there and we had a very tasty meal and a most pleasant bottle of New Zealand Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc.

Sunday June 26<sup>th</sup>: We had a late start and it was almost noon by the time I burst into something productive.

I decided to have another go at fixing my old XP desktop's CPU overheating problem by removing the cooling fan and heat sink, cleaning the contact between the heat sink and the CPU with Isopropyl Alcohol, applying a fresh layer of thermal compound and reassembling the heat sink and cooling fan. Everything went reasonably well until I powered it up.

The machine failed to boot with the message "BIOS ROM checksum error". According to the guidance on the Internet, this was not as bad as it sounded and I decided to reinstall the BOS. That was not as easy as it sounds.

Although the machine automatically looked at the old 3½ floppy drive for a new BIOS to load onto the BIOS ROM chip and I happened to have an old DOS boot disc lying around, the disc did not contain either the DOS utility awardflash.exe or the BIOS itself. What was more, the motherboard manufacturer, ABIT, had long-since disappeared into oblivion, as often happens in the fast-moving world of PC development.

Fortunately, I managed to find a copy of the BIOS utility on the Internet and, just in case anything went wrong, I used the Old School's laptop to download it on the basis that I could easily rebuild it if I had to do so. Having put the software on the laptop, I had to move it onto the 3½ inch floppy disc. Now I just happened to have, tucked away in a cupboard in my desk, a USB 3½ inch drive and that worked perfectly.

The next step was to obtain a copy of the BIOS itself and I suddenly remembered I had backed that up in Windows and, having replicated my desktop data in my account on Jenny's laptop, I was able to copy it from there.

With the floppy disc now ready to use, I powered up and the system loaded the BIOS. Wonderful, I thought.

Not a bit of it. When I reloaded without the floppy disc inserted, I received the original error.

I removed the button battery that powered the CMOS memory where a copy of the BIOS was stored when the system was disconnected from the power supply on the basis that leaving the machine without any power whatsoever would make it lose its memory. Then it ought to reload a fresh copy of the BIOS I had reinstalled when powered on and default to the factory settings.

That didn't work either.

My next step was a backwards one, in as much as it was something I should have tried first. I read the troubleshooting guide in the motherboard manual. I tried everything there and it didn't work either.

I decided to have a poke around (that's a technical term). I checked all the hardware was seated correctly. I removed the power plugs from the motherboard and reconnected them.

Whatever I did it sorted the problem and the system tried to reload. Having reloaded the BIOS and having cleared the CMOS memory, the system loaded the BIOS as it had been issued and I had to go into the setup. I loaded the optimised default settings and tweaked them for the graphics card memory and reloaded. It failed to find the system disc.

I then went through all of the BIOS settings, comparing them with a printed copy of what they should be and had to change a few settings, including the date and time.

That had Windows up and running again.

There were a couple of times the CU overheated again and I came to the conclusion that the CPU fan was not as effective as it should be. I looked around the Internet for a suitable replacement but didn't really find anything that looked as though it would improve matters. In the end, I sent a technical enquiry asking Scan Computers, from which I originally bought the computer in 2004, if they could provide or suggest something.

Meanwhile, I finally rebooted Windows XP in the evening and it remained stable until we retired for the night. That gave me an opportunity to bring all the files on my desktop up to date to mirror those on Jenny's laptop.

Monday June 27<sup>th</sup>: It was not a terribly productive day and I found it difficult to self-motivate. I started trying to tidy up the lounge a bit gave the fire and hearth a good clean.

Scan had responded to my PC enquiry. They no longer stocked any items for the processor in my 12-year-old computer, which was not really surprising. It was a case of back to the drawing board.

After lunch, I decided to have another look at Jenny's old XP laptop that failed to work. That was interrupted by a visit from Mike to discuss the Old School's new broadband account with BT.

I eventually decided the laptop's problem was the graphics card and it was too old to repair so I decided to scrap it, taking care to remove the hard drive first.

I powered up my old desktop system before tea and, apart from one moment when the CPU heated up to 88°C, it seemed to be perfectly happy.

Tuesday June 28<sup>th</sup>: Jenny wanted to nip down to the garden centre to see if they had any Nemaslug, a natural, organic slug killer to protect the lettuce we were growing in our raised bed. The trip out turned out to be a morning's excursion as we headed, first, for Ramsbottom. We toured the charity shops and ended up at Morrisons supermarket where I had to sit down on the bench in the foyer, feeling quite faint and unwell. This happened sometimes when I did not eat and drink regularly. It was more than four hours since breakfast and we had omitted to bring any bottled water with us.

As a result, we headed home for a late lunch and omitted the garden centre from our itinerary.

Still feeling a little weak and woolly-headed (so what's new?), I was wondering what to do when Jenny suggested I should tackle the filing cabinet, the plan being to go paperless by scanning everything in it and dispose of it. I managed to remove six files.

Wednesday June 29<sup>th</sup>: We headed off to Sheffield to see Jenny's niece, Tracey, who was in hospital again. She was not very well when we arrived at about 2:15 p.m. and, I am pleased to say, seemed to improve as we chatted. We left about 5:30 p.m., soon after her partner, Andy, son, Daniel and Daniel's partner, Vicky, arrived.

We went to the Meadow farm at Ecclesfield, on the way out of Sheffield heading home, for tea and arrived home for about 9:15 p.m. Traffic in both directions was not bad and we made good time, stopping on Hartcliff Hill Road on the hilltops overlooking the A616 valley on the way for lunch, despite notices returning on the M60 saying that the A56 was closed just past the junction with the A680, which was way past our exit anyway.

Thursday June 30<sup>th</sup>: I dealt with a few items on the computer and then we went in search of some natural, organic slug killer called Nemaslug at Summerseat Garden Centre. They did have some organic slug deterrents but no Nemaslug. Nemaslug contains very small, live worms that eat slugs and it is watered into the soil to kill slugs that bury themselves in the soil in fine weather, coming out to eat our lettuce when it was wet and at night. The advantage of Nemaslug is that it contains no poisonous compounds so any dead slugs killed using this method and eaten by birds, frogs or hedgehogs do not poison their natural predators, unlike the lethal slug pellets most gardeners use. It was time slug pellets and other poisonous compounds were withdrawn from sale to protect wildlife. I resolved to order some Nemaslug from Amazon.

In the afternoon, Jenny went to her yoga class and I met up with Dave Archer at the pre-school raised beds, just off the Kirklees Trail. Dave had arrived early to trim back the grass round the beds, Alistair having used the brush-cutter to deal with the long grass the previous Friday as requested by our neighbour and pre-school assistant, Bea.

Dave then gave me a lift the short distance up to the Incredible Edible plot and we recommenced the weeding process. Dave had a domestic emergency and had to leave early and I continued until Jenny came by on her way home from yoga. We came home together for a cuppa, a rest and an early finish to our activities.

June had not been a terribly productive month and I did seem to find it difficult to become motivated recently. There was so much to do and everything seemed to take so long. We both needed a holiday. The problem was getting round to organising one.