

Greenmount June 2020

Monday, 1st June 2020

Welcome to another month of “lockdown”. Not that Covid-19 had affected us much.

Household chores occupied the morning and we lunched on the bench on the patio as usual in this warm, dry spell.

The plan had been to start work on the new skirting in the small bedroom and I did that, with Jenny’s help, after lunch.

By 5 p.m., I had managed to cut and place, loosely, in position two of the four sides of skirting in the room. It was slow going due to the unevenness of the plastered walls and, unbelievably, the floor. Making the corners was something of a challenge and nothing less than I had come to expect in this house.

Not that my day ended there. Apart from tidying up, we had made arrangements with Rachel to drop off her pushbike at her flat as we went grocery shopping on Wednesday and that necessitated extracting her bike from the garage, pumping up the tyres, sorting out a bike lock so she could secure it and moving the hand pump that was attached to my bike onto hers.

All that done, which involved tidying most of the back of the garage, I then had to prepare the car so that we could fit the bike inside the hatch on Wednesday morning because I had arranged to go walking with Frank the following day and wouldn’t have any time to spare.

It was turned 6:30 p.m. before I settled down for a brief rest before tea.

In fairness, Jenny, as usual, had been working hard all day too. She had also been helping me and she cooked tea. We were both pretty shattered.

Tuesday, 2nd June 2020

We were up at about 7 a.m. and I walked up to Frank and Gwen’s house to meet Frank at 9 a.m. to go walking.

We walked up the road to its junction with Bolton Road West, crossed over and went up Redisher Lane, into the wood.

We crossed the stream by the second bridge, turned left and took the second track up the hill on the right to reach the ridge. We walked along the ridge as far as the MoD land and joined Moorbottom Road.

We turned left and took the track on the right up the hill, crossing the moorland to reach Pilgrim's Cross. After a short refreshment break there, we took the trail to the left to the trig point on Bull Hill. Continuing along this track, curving right, dropping down and crossing the Rossendale Way, we made our way down to the main road into Helmshore.

We turned right up the road, crossed over and took a track down to the left which eventually led us onto the old railway line, now cycle route 6. We turned right along the cycle track and followed this to Strongstry, where we stopped for lunch in the public gardens.

We crossed over the road and went under the East Lancashire Railway bridge, taking the path on the right, with the river Irwell on our left, into Stubbins. We crossed the road, turned left over the bridge and took the path on the right to Ramsbottom.

We stopped for a refreshment break in the gardens by the river before making our way through the park to pick up the Irwell Sculpture Trail back towards Summerseat. We diverted off that to follow the path to the right on the cobbled section, just before Summerseat, to wind our way up to Holcombe Brook. From there it was a short walk along Bolton Road West and down Holcombe Road to home.

I arrived home at about 3 p.m. so, having been out for six hours, I estimated that we had covered some 10 to 12 miles, allowing for breaks.

As we parted company at Frank and Gwen's house, we arranged to meet up for another walk next week.

A nice cold drink and a nice cool shower revived me somewhat but my left knee was quite painful.

In the early evening, after I had dozed off for an hour or so, I started to tidy up some of the recorded TV programmes we had watched.

Wednesday, 3rd June 2020

We had another early start to go grocery shopping. We had planned to visit Rachel first, to drop off her pushbike, but it was raining, the weather having taken a turn for the worse after a fairly long and unusually warm, sunny, dry spell. The garden needed the rain and it saved me having to put on the sprinkler in the evening.

We headed straight for Unicorn in Chorlton and then went on to Waitrose in Broadheath as usual.

We called at Matthew and Carrie's house on the way back. Matthew was growing some of his own herbs and vegetables and offered some of his excess plants he had grown from seed. Like us, he was running out of growing room. The extra raised bed we had ordered via Matthew wasn't expected for at least another week.

After lunch, I finished off tidying up my media, breaking off to harvest and chop some fresh mint for Jenny so she could make some minted lamb burgers for me.

Thursday, 4th June 2020

It was almost noon by the time we had breakfasted, tidied up, etc. and I had created a new Acronis Universal Restore CD, copied the image of my desktop system drive to another disc for back up using Acronis and ordered another pack of slug nematodes, mainly to protect my strawberries and my hosta.

A consequence of the latter required me to check my E-mails for the order confirmation and it took another half-hour to deal with the most pressing ones, not having done so for a couple of days.

We did a couple of hours gardening, putting in two new herbs, putting more straw round the strawberries, putting more compost round the potatoes, consigning a few slugs we found under the pots to the garden waste bin and generally tidying up the pots and raised beds. Jenny harvested some herbs as well.

We broke off for lunch inside, although the sun was out and it was turning quite warm. We had left-over pizza and salad.

After lunch, we went down to the garden centre for some pots and came back to pot some tomato plants, some peas and some mange-tout Matthew had given us.

By the time we had tidied up it was 6 p.m., just as it started to turn quite cold and there was the beginning of a brief shower.

Friday, 5th June 2020

The morning and the early afternoon were occupied with putting in the TV recordings for next week and tidying up the ones we had watched recently.

Administrative work took up the rest of the afternoon, mostly balancing the accounts yet again and dealing with E-mails.

Saturday, 6th June 2020

After breakfast and tidying up, we went out and potted up the seedlings Matthew had given us. We finished that at about 2:30 p.m. and came in for a late lunch.

It wasn't worth starting anything major after lunch so I updated my web site.

My sister, Barbara rang and we chatted for the best part of an hour. Meanwhile, Matthew had been sending me messages on Skype and after the call, I replied, arranging to go down to see him and Carrie late tomorrow afternoon.

Just after lunch, my Amazon order arrived. One of the items was the BBC 1950s Quatermass trilogy, The Quatermass Experiment, Quatermass II and Quatermass and the Pit. I remember watching Quatermass II when I was eight years old and I was scared stiff! I was looking forward to watching the three series (unfortunately, only the first two episodes of The Quatermass Experiment existed and the remainder were provided on the DVD in script form only). I thought it would be interesting to compare them with the films, the first two starring Biran Donlevi and the last one Andrew Kerr as Quatermass.

Sunday, 7th June 2020

We went down to see Rachel in Manchester and called to see Matthew and Carrie on the way back.

I started moving data from my first of my old 1 TB external hard drives to the first of my new 2 TB external hard drive, the second item of my Amazon delivery.

Monday, 8th June 2020

I spent the morning and early part of the afternoon potting and planting again. After lunch, I finished the task I started yesterday and started moving data from the second of my old 1 TB external hard drives to the second of the new 2 TB external hard drives.

Tuesday, 9th June 2020

I called round for Frank at 9:30 and we went walking again. We walked up Holcombe Road, turning left along Holhouse Lane, through the gate onto the track, following this round to the right to pick up the footpath along the side of the field, leading to Bolton Road.

Crossing Bolton Road and turning right, we went up Redisher Lane on the left, as we did last week. We entered Redisher wood and, taking the second bridge over the brook, followed the path with the brook to our left up past Simon's Lodge and climbed up onto the ridge.

Once again, we followed the ridge path until it joined Moorbottom Road and turned left along the stony track that was once a busy route. We followed this past Red Brook (which further down became Holcombe Brook) and took the path left at Lark Hill.

At the end, we turned left at the lane and right at Holcombe Hey Fold. The track led to a narrow path and then a path across a field to emerge on another lane, with a footpath straight across.

We took that path down to a house and a track that led onto Hawkshaw Lane. We followed that to Hawkshaw.

Straight across the main road was the track down past the Tennis Club and we turned left off this to walk through Two Brooks Valley, stopping for lunch part way along.

Reaching the cottages in the wood, we turned left over the bridge and took the path up the hillside behind the cottages to Holly Mount, returning home across Greenmount Golf Course.

I was home for about 3 p.m. having covered about 7 miles.

I resumed the task of moving data to my 2 TB hard drive.

Wednesday, 10th June 2020

We went grocery shopping, arriving at Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park for about 7:45 a.m. Jenny managed to shelter from the rain under the store front canopy until she was allowed in at 8 a.m. I sat in the car and listened to a Louis Armstrong CD.

Jenny couldn't find everything she wanted at Sainsbury's, so we called at Tesco in Prestwich for a few more items.

After lunch, we went to see Bob and Marie, Matthew's in-laws, to deliver Marie's birthday card and some flowers. We stayed and chatted on the patio for a couple of hours or so.

Back home, I finished moving my data to my new portable hard drive.

Thursday, 11th June 2020

With Jenny's help, I managed to finish cutting and fitting the new, varnished, wooden skirting in the small bedroom. The uneven walls and unlevel floor didn't make the task easy and it was necessary to remove some plaster to make the skirting fit sufficiently snugly to the walls.

Final positioning and gluing to the wall were tasks for another day. It was 5:30 p.m. by the time we had tidied up.

Friday, 12th June 2020

We didn't struggle out of bed until 10:45. The walk on Tuesday, the early start and long day on Wednesday and all the running up and down stairs and twisting and turning in the small bedroom yesterday seem to have taken their toll. I made a mental note to stop enjoying myself.

A nice surprise awaited us on the door mat. There was a large, bulky, A4, hand-delivered envelope for our attention. It contained details of the [Queen's Award for Volunteer Groups](#) and a badge each for Jenny and me for our volunteering at the village dementia café.

At some stage in the future, after this corona virus (or Covid-19, as it is called) pandemic situation has been resolved, two representatives of D-CaFF were expected to be invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

After breakfast and dealing with the dishes, I telephoned Joani Beale, who founded and who organised the D-CaFF sessions, to thank her for delivering the award.

The main task of the day was to put in the TV recordings for the coming week.

Late afternoon, we went down to see Matthew and Carrie and to collect the wood for a fourth raised bed. Matthew had ordered two, one for me and one for himself.

Saturday, 13th June 2020

Since many of our seedlings and plants needed to be put into the new raised bed, the objective for the day was to put the wood we had collected from Matthew together to make the new bed.

I started that task and discovered I did not have enough screws of the right type, size or length. We packed up for lunch and I made a list of everything we needed:

- At least a dozen stainless-steel, Number 10 by 2½ inch screws
- A saw (I had been needing a saw for ages. All I had was a tenon saw.)
- Staples for the staple gun to fix the bed lining in position. Jenny had found some plastic I could use which save buying some.
- Organic compost to fill the bed once it had been constructed.

The first three items we obtained from Wickes in Bury. I then went to Leebrook Garden Centre in Rawtenstall for the New Horizon, Organic, Peat-free Compost. The price of the latter had hiked up to over £7 for a 60 litre bag (I had bought ten in recent weeks already) and the chap at the garden centre refused to do a deal so I bought six bags for now and decided not to shop there again. Jenny pointed out that their pots were far more expensive than those at Summerseat Garden Centre as well, so the place seemed to us to be something of a rip-off.

Returning home, I finished off the raised bed construction and made it fit on the existing bench, adjacent to the existing raised bed, having moved all of the pots onto the old patio table, now temporarily positioned on the lawn, in the sun. By the time I had packed up and brought the new bags of compost into the garage it was 6:30 p.m. and I was shattered.

Sunday, 14th June 2020

I didn't sleep well due to irritation in both upper legs. I think lifting the six bags of compost played havoc with my sciatic nerve. My first fifteen minutes of the day were spent on the Chinese back stretcher on the living room floor. That seemed to do the trick.

I was treated to a proper English breakfast and afterwards we lined the new raised bed, filled it with the compost we had purchased and planted out our crops. Fatigue stopped play at about 4:30 p.m. and I left the grass cutting until the morning, expecting thunder and rain around 5 p.m.

I came in to listen to the recording of Jazz Record requests.

Monday, 15th June 2020

I cut the grass back and front and started trimming the edges at the back, which was slow going because I had to use the hand shears for three of the four sides of the garden to avoid damaging the edging plants and because, in places, there simply wasn't the room to use the strimmer.

I left off for lunch on the bench just as it started to rain. I was going to put up the parasol for some shelter and carry on outside because, although the raindrops were large, there wasn't a lot of them and I expected it to stop fairly quickly. I was wrong. The rain became lighter but more persistent so I quickly tidied up and we came indoors. The rain didn't last long, although showers and some thunder were forecast for the afternoon.

I went out and continued trimming the back edge of the back garden and cut down the rhubarb. The large, infrequent drops of rain started again and I left off edge-trimming to put out the bins for collection tomorrow and empty the kitchen waste into the compost bin while the weather made up its mind. The rain stopped. The thunder rumbled on. I carried on and was half-way down the last edge when it started to rain again, persistently. I came in to deal with some E-mails.

Tuesday, 16th June 2020

I met up with Frank at his home at 9 a.m. and we headed off to the local Jumbles Country Park.

Our route took us up through Old Kays to Turton Road using the path that followed the stream and then climbed steeply.

We walked along Turton Road and went up the first track on the left, following the path through fields to emerge on the road at Affetside. We turned right and took the footpath on the left by the millennium garden.

On reaching the road at the bottom of the hill, we crossed over onto the lane opposite and then took the path on the right up to Jumbles Reservoir. We followed this path all the way to Turton Bottoms, breaking our walk with a rest on a conveniently placed bench under the trees on the

way. It was on this bench that I remarked there were a few spots of rain. A passing chap informed us that it was, in fact, raining quite fast and that the trees were sheltering us.

We put on our waterproof coats and continued our walk to Turton Bottoms. The rain became somewhat heavier and more persistent and we stopped briefly to put on our waterproof over-trousers.

Having taken a track on the right, we walked up to the road leading to Edgeworth. As we did so, the heavy rain continued and the track became a stream of gushing water. We managed to avoid the worst of it by walking up the centre rather than the ruts at either side worn by some kind of vehicle. Nevertheless, I soon realised I had put on my old, soft walking boots that were no longer waterproof.

We turned right and walked up the road with water running down each side. As we reached the track opposite, at the head of Walves Reservoir, we crossed the road and walked up the track. This was new ground to us both.

The track led up past some dwellings and through what appeared to be a farmyard. The sign on the gate at the bottom of the track had said it was a B&B establishment. There were no way markers beyond the point at which we started on this track.

Relying on the OS map, we found the path we wanted at the top of the hill, on the right, just as the track on which we were walking curved to the left. The narrow path at first appeared to be a stream and Frank led the way down the steep slope with long grass on either side, into woodland. It soon became clear this was indeed the path and we followed it as it snaked its way downwards to emerge, eventually, on Hawkshaw Lane.

From there, we followed the same route as last week, returning via Two Brooks Valley, Holly Mount and Greenmount Golf Course. We stopped for lunch at the same spot as well.

Having arrived home, I removed my wet outer clothing and had a shower, which was followed by a nice cup of tea.

I had ordered a full set of printer cartridges for my Cannon i990 printer from Cartridge People yesterday and Jenny had taken delivery of a parcel for me that turned out to be my red, photo-magenta and photo-cyan cartridges. An E-mail I subsequently read said my other four cartridges had not yet been shipped and the one my printer was demanding, cyan, was one of these. Cartridge People had included a free pen though.

Wednesday, 17th June 2020

We went grocery shopping to Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Bradheath. A pleasant surprise was that Unicorn finally had a stock of yeast and it was organic. Even better, Waitrose had four organic, whole legs of lamb and, yes, we bought one.

Our good fortune did not stop there. We returned home just in time to take delivery of the remainder of the print cartridges I had ordered. The driver of the van was just leaving as we arrived home and came back with my parcel when he realised we could take delivery.

After lunch, I dealt with my E-mails that had been piling up, put the cartridge I needed in the printer, printed the DVD cover I wanted and put the DVD, which was one of those free ones issued with a newspaper in a small cardboard sleeve, in a proper case.

Thursday, 18th June 2020

I spent the miserable wet day tidying up my media, that is the TV recordings we had watched.

Friday, 19th June 2020

Matthew called round on his bike before we had breakfast for a chat and to drop off my Father's Day card for Sunday. He had a look at my garden and raised beds and we chatted about growing fruit and vegetables amongst other things.

He left and was home before the worst of the torrential rain started. Fortunately, it didn't last and, contrary to the forecast, it dried up towards the end of the day. It was very cold for the time of year though.

Being a Friday, the main task of the day was to put in the TV recordings for the coming week. I did that in the conservatory, which was, given the overcast sky, surprisingly, the warmest place in the house.

Saturday, 20th June 2020

I was planning to glue the new skirting in place in the small bedroom and fill the crack in the wall that had appeared behind the radiator.

Jenny had noticed that slugs had started to live and breed inside the bark on the old, dead sycamore tree stump so I went out to remove the bark and the slugs.

That necessitated the cutting back of a shrub I had planted, mainly for ground cover and which had started to spread considerably. We decided to remove it altogether but we couldn't do that until we had completely removed the tree stump.

Having removed the bark, I started on the tree stump. The plan was to cut it into manageable pieces before attempting to tackle the roots. Using my bow saw took a good two hours to remove the first section. It would have been much quicker using a chain saw but this method was more environmentally-friendly and I benefitted from the exercise.

I was ready for lunch.

We went back out in the garden and I picked the first few blackcurrants that were ripe. I thought they were a bit early this year.

I dug up some of the plants in the back border with the intention of making it a back-up herb garden for the one in the raised bed, the latter restricting the quantity we could grow. I moved one of the two bunches of chives from the raised bed into the new plot and planted some parsley in the raised bed in its place.

We put our second net over the second two raised beds to keep the birds off our crops.

We came in, shattered, at 6 p.m.

Sunday, 21st June 2020

After trying and failing to fix a problem with the automatic start-up of my Canon printer status window on the laptop accessing the printer connected to my desktop PC, I left off to help Jenny pot some plants Carrie had dropped off earlier when she called in with a bottle of beer for me and a bunch of flowers for Jenny. The beer was an additional present for father's day, Matthew having already presented me with the timber for the most recent raised bed, which was now up and growing.

We potted four pepper plants and a cucumber plant and put them in the conservatory that was now beginning to look more like a greenhouse.

I took the opportunity to remove some of the weeds that had started to grow again in the block paving and I needed to schedule some time to remove the new growth. That was going to take three or four days. Sylvia across the back said I could help myself to some mint from the patch she had, started from some I gave her ages ago, to plant in my new herb plot at the back of the garden.

We tidied up just as rain threatened and came in for lunch.

After lunch, I finally recommenced work on the skirting in the small bedroom and managed to glue on the piece under the window (the radiator wall). In the process I cut the middle finger of my right hand very badly and since I had to carry on and fit the piece of skirting, the finger continued to bleed under the plaster Jenny applied for me. When I had finished that piece of skirting, I gave up for the day.

Monday, 22nd June 2020

The plan was to continue with the skirting in the small bedroom. Before doing so, I wanted to make sure the first piece had securely set in place and on checking the adhesive it said that it took between 24 and 48 hours to fully cure, so that went on the back burner.

I put out Jenny's washing lines for her and since I was at a loose end (no pun intended) she asked me to help clean the bathroom . I was called upon to clean the stainless steel radiator. That took a little while and, on completion, I noticed how dusty the tiled wall behind it was.

I started cleaning the tiles behind the radiator and ended up doing the whole bathroom, which was fully tiled. That included cleaning on top of the fitted units because Jenny couldn't reach, even when using the step-stool.

We broke off for a late lunch.

After lunch, I resumed work on backing up the hard drive on my Windows 7 desktop using Acronis True Image. The previous attempt had failed because it told me that my licence was invalid. So did this one and what I expected to be a ten-minute job occupied the rest of the day, resulting in a bug report to Acronis about the status of my licence.

Tuesday, 23rd June 2020

I met Frank at the old school at 9 a.m. for a walk up to Grant's Tower. We walked down the road to Summerseat, taking the path/lane (Robin Road) to the left just past the road junction on the right, with the restaurant and the terraced houses on the right as we walked along it. This led to a path that turned right and climbed steeply through woodland, levelling off and turning right with the Nuttall housing development on the left and woodland on the right.

The path joined the cobbled walkway that came up from the bottom of Summerseat and we turned left. This was part of the Irwell Valley Sculpture Trail. We followed this path towards Ramsbottom as far as the bridge across the river Irwell.

Crossing the bridge, we climbed the steps opposite instead of following the trail left which went to Ramsbottom. The steep climb up the steps led to the bridge across the M66 and the other side presented a more gentle incline, up through a field, then a slightly steeper track to meet the A56.

Crossing the A56, we took the track opposite, angled to the left. We followed this track up past the farm and through the gate ahead. This climbed and led to a lane. We turned right and then took a footpath to the left as we approached a house, where the lane ended. This path led directly to Grant's Tower.

From there, we continued along the track and then took the path on the left, by the iron gate, behind the house, to join a lane that led to the house on the right. Following this lane led to Bury Old Road and we turned left.

We followed this until we reached a track that headed right and we followed this to the point it turned left. On the corner was footpath on the right, uphill, that followed the edge of Fletcher Bank Quarry. At the top, as the path turned left, there were two paths leading off, one to the right and one straight on. We took the latter, passing the trig point on Harden Moor to Wham Hill Farm.

The path at the farm should have gone straight through the yard but it had been diverted. The problem was that there were no clear path markers and we ended up climbing over a gate onto a path that led to the farm yard. From there, we followed the track away from the farm towards the A680. We diverted off the track to take a footpath off to the right that led to Cheesden Bridge. We stopped for lunch at the style that led to the main road.

After lunch, we turned left along the A680 for a short distance to pick up Bamford Road on the left. This track led down to Shuttleworth.

As we reached Shuttleworth, we turned left and walked up to the main road. We turned right and took the first public footpath on the left. That led us down to the path along the river Irwell in the valley and we turned left to walk into Ramsbottom.

After a brief rest on a bench overlooking the river, where one mallard had half a dozen chicks on the water, we walked up Bridge Street, crossed over the A676 and commenced the steep climb up Carr Street. Where the road turned left, we continued straight up the cobbled cull-de-sac and took the footpath ahead, which was a steep climb up through the wood to Helmsore Road, the B6214. Crossing over, we went up the track opposite to Moor Road, which was more of a track than a proper road.

Moor road went left and right, there was a road the led up to Harcles Hill Farm that went off diagonally right and a track that went straight up and then curved left. We took the latter, keeping to the lower track where it branched, following this to Peel Tower.

We made the steep descent from there, taking the first footpath off to the right as the track ahead curved sharply left, crossing Moorbotom Road at the bottom of the hill, crossing the fields and finally by way of Redisher wood, talking the path to the right of the waterfall, having crossed the stream, near the bottom.

We crossed the bridge over Redbrook (or Holcombe Brook) and took the main track upwards to come down Redisher Lane. Crossing the A676, we took the footpath opposite, slightly right along the edge of the field to Holhouse Farm, turned right, again along the edge of the field and then came down the edge of the golf course and home.

We had been walking for about 6½ hours, climbed a total of about 1,600 feet and walked about 11 miles after taking account of rests. It seemed like much more.

I just about had enough energy for a quick, cool shower. I had walked in shorts and I had been plagued by large, blood-sucking flies on parts of the trek. The bites on my legs were quite large and red and were itching somewhat so I doused them with cider vinegar both after my shower and before going to bed.

Wednesday, 24th June 2020

Jenny and I went grocery shopping to Sainbury's and Home Bargains at Heaton Park and we called at Tesco, Prestwich on our way home.

It was a really warm, sunny day. After lunch, my sous-chef task was to wash the dishes from our evening meal the previous evening, breakfast and lunch.

After that, it was too hot to work outside and I was too shattered, having been up at 6 a.m., to do much inside so I worked on the PC for a couple of hours.

Thursday, 25th June 2020

I didn't sleep well due to the heat and my insect bites on my legs from Tuesday still itching despite regular covering with cider vinegar. I woke three times during the night to douse them again. As a result it was past 10 a.m. before we surfaced.

I had a quick, cold shower and treated my bites again. That seemed, finally, to give me some relief from the itching. These natural treatments did work....eventually.

I started my day by washing the dishes, putting out the washing lines and picking the ripe and partially ripe strawberries, the latter being allowed to finish off in the very hot conservatory.

We adjusted the netting over the salad and vegetable raised bed to give the plants more room to grow upwards.

Jenny came in to make some bread and gave me the task of topping and tailing the blackcurrants we had picked yesterday, which I did in the dining room with all the doors and windows open and the Dyson fan running at full speed. It was too hot to work outside.

After that, I came into the slightly cooler lounge and caught up with some administrative work on the PC while Jenny finished off the two loaves.

After a quick snack for lunch, Jenny turned the blackcurrants into four individual fruit crumbles since they weighed only just over 9 ounces, not enough to make any jam. I continued to work on the PC, looking unsuccessfully for a good, all-purpose, stainless steel watering can and ordering some gluten-free brown and white rice flour for Jenny, 4 x 1 Kg bags of the former and 3 x 1 Kg bags of the latter, from Healthy Supplies, the brand being Sussex Whole Foods.

Friday, 26th June 2020

I had an unexpected and most welcome Skype message from Mike in New Zealand to which I replied and I exchanged a couple of messages with Matthew.

I dealt with my E-mails, including some village business with Greater Manchester Police.

On my way to the desktop in the conservatory, I stopped off in the kitchen to wash the dishes and then slice up the two loaves Jenny had baked the previous day, so she could freeze them.

I went through the TV programmes for the coming week and scheduled the recordings, finishing off that task after lunch.

I duplicated the recordings on the lounge laptop, which I used as my primary recorder, with the desktop as a back-up.

Finally, I tidied up the programmes we had watched.

Saturday, 27 June 2020

After Jenny had a restless night with pain in her right leg, we did not rise until 10:00 a.m.

I spent most of the day trying unsuccessfully to use Acronis True Image to back up my Windows 7 desktop hard drive. I ended up sending Acronis an update to my request for assistance, making my dissatisfaction with the product perfectly clear.

I took time out to take Jenny down to see Matthew and Carrie, dropping off a card for their wedding anniversary, tomorrow.

I gave up on my attempts to back up my hard drive on the desktop Windows 7 computer for the present and attempts to try to back up the Windows 10 laptop were complicated by the difficulty in creating the Acronis True Image back-up on a USB drive and convincing the Lonovo laptop to boot from it.

I started to wonder why life was made so unnecessarily complicated. Surely technology should be applied in such more intuitive way to make life simpler.

Sunday, 28th June, 2020

It was another late start following another restless night, this time being my turn to have aching legs, probably due to all the sitting around the previous day.

Over the past few days I had been conversing with Mike Nottage, who was once married to my niece, in New Zealand, using Skype. There was a Skype message and a couple of E-mails from him, one of which was an excellent picture of his family gathered together. All of that demanded a reply.

I forwarded the picture to a few family members to whom I thought it might be of interest and put a couple of updates on my family tree spreadsheet.

All of that was between breakfast and washing the dishes.

I decided it was time I tackled the small bedroom skirting and I stuck the second length on the outside wall. I had just finished that and started preparing the long length on the opposite inside wall when the telephone rang but it stopped before I reached it. It was my sister, Barbara and

since we usually chatted at the weekend, I called her. For the most part, we discussed the NZ family photo.

I went back upstairs to finish off the last two pieces of skirting and had just enough adhesive to do so, although not enough to finish off filling in the gaps at the top of the piece along the long, inside wall.

It was 3:40 p.m. when I finished and too late to go down to Wickes in bury for more adhesive so I left that until tomorrow – or possibly Wednesday, when we would be grocery shopping, to save on fuel.

I helped Jenny with a bit of tea preparation by peeling the potatoes which took me nicely up to 4:00 p.m., just in time to listen to Jazz Record Requests on BBC Radio 3. It was even worse than usual. At one point, I found the track played so nauseating, I had to mute the sound. There was one track featuring that excellent trombonist Jack Teagarden but it was not to my taste.

Monday, 29th June 2020

The rain that started last Friday persisted, albeit showery, with much lower temperatures. It was making fruit picking impossible and there were a lot of ripe blackcurrants on the bushes. The thunderstorms that were forecast had not matured, although some of the rain had been very heavy.

It was a typical British summer, then and at least it kept the morons from the beaches, unlike the previous week end when the selfish, inconsiderate hordes ignored the Covid-19 regulations and flocked to the coast in mindless droves. The danger was some of those people would be carrying the disease without any symptoms and they would infect others, who being generally fit and healthy, would show few symptoms but would pass it on to vulnerable people who may well die. Not that they cared.

We were starting to return to our roots of lawlessness and survival of the fittest. With the latest report I read on climate change, we were facing the beginning of the decline of our civilisation and the onset of a sixth extinction level event on this planet. A case of “So long and thanks for all the fish!”

On a more positive note, I finished the Radio Times crossword for this week with a little help from Jenny.

Frank telephoned to say he couldn't go walking this or next week. As the weather had been and remained unpleasant, this week was not feasible anyway.

It was so cold by 2 p.m. that we lit the log fire. It was only a few days ago that it was 30°C outside and we had all the doors and windows open and now it was only about 13°C and the wind made it seem colder.

I decided to do some more work on my revised web site until tea time.

Tuesday, 30th June 2020

I was up just after 7 a.m. and had a migraine. I hadn't had one of those for ages, although they used to be quite common in my early teens. This one made me feel really rough and it was fortunate I wasn't going walking with Frank this week.

I chatted on Skype with Mike in NZ for a short time and then thought I might tackle the job of putting the central heating radiator back on the wall in the small bedroom. Looking at the job, I decided against it because the glue I had used to fix the new skirting the wall on Sunday afternoon took up to 48 hours to set completely and I did not want to disturb it before then.

I dealt with my E-mails, including providing more information to Acronis regarding the problem I was having with the licence for True Image. I also brought the accounts up to date, this being the month end.

I helped Jenny to clean the toaster, removing all of the bits of bread that had refused to leave the bottom of the appliance.

Jenny asked for my help to clean the Miele fridge-freezer. She wanted me to remove the drawers in the fridge so she could clean behind and under them. I couldn't work out how to remove them so I consulted the manual. Removal and subsequent refitting of the drawers and the tray above them was so easy. That's German engineering for you.

That took us up to lunchtime. Afterwards, the rain stopped and we went outside to pick the blackcurrants. A brief shower almost prevented us completing that task but it soon cleared up and we carried on.

With those blackcurrants that were ripe picked, I tidied up the garden a little. There wasn't much I could do until it dried out. The afternoon remained dry and even started to warm up a little, so we strolled up to the Incredible Edible plot and picked about a pound and a half of raspberries.

Picking all the fruit sorted out our plans for tomorrow – grocery shopping, followed by a jam-making session. Who said I never planned ahead?