

Greenmount – March 2010

We are well into March as I commence this month's update and for good reason.

First my old gastric problem has returned with a vengeance, so much so that in cleaning the cat's latrine, I would have taken out a spade and dug myself a hole, except that the ground was still frozen. Since I have had numerous tests over the last few years and the medical profession has so far detected no serious problem, I have resolved not to seek further advice in that quarter. We have a good supply of garlic, broccoli, yoghurt and Scottish malt whisky.

Second, my desk top computer developed yet another problem with the operating system and I have completely reinstalled Windows and all the software from scratch for the second time in as many months. I'm getting better at this. It only took me two and a half days, using my notes from last time and I have now made a revised set of notes for the next time. Guinness Book of Records here I come.

I have a quotation for a replacement laptop for Jenny from Dell. I have put together a very high specification on the basis that I can use it to replace my desktop system as well, should that go to hell before I do. Unfortunately, I have not been able to justify the cost to myself and, more importantly, to Jenny, so I have not ordered it.

Meanwhile, I have been trying to find a replacement graphics card for Jenny's laptop again. I wrote to the manufacturer, AMD, whose reply was polite but not terribly helpful. I contacted Fujitsu again and the price of a replacement card has gone up from £180 to £250. I told the chap where he could plug it in. I have scoured the Internet for a replacement card with no success and I have even looked for a second-hand laptop of the same make and model on the basis I can use one or the other for spares. I missed one on E-bay for about £200. So, if I do decide to repair it, unless anyone out there has a Fujitsu M1437G with a working graphics card they don't want, it's probably a case of retrieving the new card from Fujitsu and giving it a good wipe down with anti-bacterial cleaner.

The spell of fine weather in the early part of March tempted me outside to wash both cars at the week end. I thought the exercise would do me good. How wrong can one be? At least the cars are clean and we can now see through the windows, something of an advantage, especially when driving on the motorway. Rachel came out to vacuum and clean the insides. She should have a go at mine. It was quite pleasant in the sun but the water on the ground in the shade froze and made the task more interesting.

By the 21st, my innards had recovered sufficiently to take some exercise and Jenny and I went on a 10-mile, round walk, commencing with the twenty-or-so-minute climb up Holcombe Hill to the Peel Monument. We followed the track down, parallel with Harcles Hill and then turned right down the path through Buckden Wood, at which point we stopped to eat lunch. The route took us down to Stubbins and back to Ramsbottom by the River Irwell.

The amount of litter along the river banks can only be described as appalling. Unfortunately, those responsible for our water courses derive a handsome income by charging companies that discharge waste into our rivers, so there is little incentive for anyone to do anything

about it. What a green and pleasant land this is.

From Ramsbottom, we took the path up to meet the main road at St. Andrew's Church, where Jenny operates her school crossing and then walked home by the main road.

Surprisingly, I was actually able to move the following morning.

On the 23rd, I drove Jenny to Leigh (about 40 minutes in a more-or-less westerly direction from home) to see her herbalist for the second time. She is opposed to the chemicals pushed by the drug companies' reps, also known as GPs and is taking some concoction of natural juices. The herbal medication seems to be working, albeit very slowly and expensively.

We are both of the opinion that medical training should include forms of treatment other than that currently regarded as conventional and all of this should be available on the NHS.

While Jenny was waiting for her appointment, I went for a walk round Leigh town centre. It occurred to me to try the computer repair shops to see if I could find a graphics card for Jenny's laptop. This strategy met with a degree of success in as much I found a second-hand card but the chap could not guarantee that it was in working order. He suggested that I take the laptop into him and he would replace the card. If it worked, it would cost me £65. If it didn't, it would cost me £15 for his time and he would put the old one back.

With the prospect of a low-cost repair on the horizon, we were back in Leigh with the laptop the following day. The chap we needed to see was not in the shop and we had to go walkabout again for an hour or so until he arrived. He took the laptop to bits on the counter as I watched and replaced the graphics card. The screen responded with a series of vertical lines, apparently another common fault with the ATI Mobility Radeon X700 graphics card. The nice man took out his even more faulty card and put mine back and then took my £15.

So I am no further forward at the cost of a trip to Leigh, £15 and a wasted day.

On the 27th we were back at The Old School, sorting out the electrical equipment for the jumble sale at 4 pm on the 29th. With the assistance of a kind donation of a working computer system, the takings for electrical goods were up more than 50% on last time, the overall income ensuring the continued maintenance of our village hall, thanks to the church and all those who freely give their time.

The rest of March was a bit of an anti-climax.