

## **Greenmount March 2018**

### **Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> March**

I spent most of the day on Jenny's laptop dealing with administrative items.

Jenny was not well and I lit a fire for the second day running as well as having the heating on to keep out the intense cold.

I had started the day by taking Rachel down to Bury, having collected her the evening before from the tram station. Driving in the snow was not easy and the roads required extra care, being covered in snow and slippery. It was a case of driving slowly and keeping a good distance between vehicles, with all the lights on. There were idiots around who didn't have much of a clue, which made matters worse.

It certainly was not a day for going outside.

### **Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> March**

The snow had stopped and the drive where I had cleared it twice in the last two days remained clear of snow, so I had no difficulty in getting the car onto the road.

The estate roads had not been gritted or cleared so I was thankful I had a good set of tyres and managed to make it to the main road easily enough to go grocery shopping.

With the M62 blocked in both directions, there was not a lot of traffic about and the major roads and the M60 motorway were clear of snow and had been well gritted so we made it to Unicorn in record time. For once, driving was a pleasure, even along the A56 to Waitrose and back and there were no delays on the M60 coming home either, the M62 being still blocked in both directions and many of the schools closed due to the bad weather.

For once, a forty-minute drive was achieved there and back.

I finished off my day by setting up all the TV recordings for the week and there were a lot of them.

### **Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

Jenny had a bad throat and a chesty cough. She spent a good few hours in bed, sleeping and keeping warm.

I spent the day on the computer, moving information around on my external hard drives to create more working disc space.

### **Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> March**

I was on the computer again, updating the village web site, the Tottington web site and my web site. The latter was prompted by dealing with E-mails I had received and left pending.

I booked a week's holiday in Bridlington for the end of April.

### **Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> March**

We went into Ramsbottom for a potter round the charity shops and to buy some more sticky, felt pads for the feet of the chairs in the dining room. We made the inevitable call at Tesco, finding yellow Tail Chardonnay and Shiraz was on offer at £6 a bottle. Since that was the same price as Bargain Booze and we were in the store, we picked up two bottles of each.

After lunch at home, I finished off the latest update to my web site, which involved adding three videos, one from Greenpeace and two related videos about plastic in the oceans from Youtube.

### **Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> March**

I worked on the computer in the morning, dealing with TV recordings from the previous day and an update to my web site.

Jenny went to the hair dresser just after 1 p.m. and Joani collected me for a Dementia Awareness session at Dundee Lane United Reformed Church, which went very well.

Jenny was home before my return at just after 5 p.m. and I continued with my web site update which dragged on into the mid-evening.

### **Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> March**

We were up early because we had arranged to go to on a guided tour of Towneley Hall in Burnley with the Tottington District Civic Society and we were taking our friends, Lorna and Gwen.

Lorna and Gwen joined us at 10 a.m. and we made our way there, arriving a good half hour before the rest of the group, fourteen in all.

We had an excellent guide called Derek who made the tour of the old Towneley family home, now owned by Burnley Council, interesting and most entertaining and, while I took most of the pictures, Derek offered to take the group picture in the family dining room.

After the tour of this very old building, we all went to the more modern café for lunch before returning home at about 2:45 p.m.

We had taken the quicker route to the Hall via the M65 and the outskirts of Burnley and I chose to return home using the slightly longer and more scenic route through the small hamlets of Water, Waterfoot and Rawtenstall, the route from Burnley to Waterfoot being new to me.

It had been a pleasant day out and the sun had been shining, although the lake in the Hall grounds was still partially frozen, which didn't seem to worry the ducks too much.

By the time we had settled back at home, I was feeling quite tired and soon fell asleep for an hour or two on the settee in the lounge, which was a mistake because I felt terrible when I woke up.

I dealt with a couple of TV recordings from earlier in the day and checked a recording that was scheduled for around 7 p.m. That was not being recorded. Further examination and investigation revealed that there was no signal for the channel in question on either the computer or on the television due to some work on the local transmitter at Winter Hill that required a retune.

I retuned the television and the channel burst into life.

I retuned the computer. That didn't do so well. Much of the guide was lost and I had to work through various channels, tuning into each, to obtain the latest guide listings all because the guide download provided by Microsoft didn't work. Losing the guide information resulted in the loss of a couple of recordings and I had to reinstate them.

I sent an E-mail to the Freeview web site, when I eventually found the general enquiry E-mail address, tucked away on the press page ([help@freeview.co.uk](mailto:help@freeview.co.uk)) to ask how I could be placed on a list of people to be notified in advance by E-mail when engineering work was planned at the Winter Hill transmitter so that I could retune before the work affected my recordings. I wasn't going to hold my breath because my guess was that those responsible for Freeview didn't understand the concept of being pro-active. It was all very well putting out notifications on television but if one did not see them, it was a complete waste of time and money.

### **Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> March**

I took the opportunity of a decent day to cut some wood for the fire. Our energy bills had started to climb somewhat following the recent severe cold spell and I decided it was time to use the log fire as much as possible.

### **Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> March**

We had to be at the Cricket Club early because Jenny had been organising people to provide batches of scones for the monthly dementia café, D-CaFF, where we had a presentation of slides of old Bury alongside their more modern equivalent and the audience was invited to guess the locations depicted before the latter was shown. That was followed by "afternoon tea" with jam and cream scones and a sing-along.

We briefly nipped home before descending on Prestwich for our weekly grocery-shop,

not having time to go down to Unicorn and Waitrose.

We made what was intended to be a brief stop at the Dennis Gore Chemist for a few herbal and natural medicinal items. We were accosted by the man himself, Dennis Gore, who treated us to a presentation of various health items, providing us with reading matter on each and a guided tour of the internal premises. He was a very nice chap and an excellent salesman. Unfortunately for him, he was dealing with a couple of Yorkshire folk. We did come away with some Vitamin D tablets, which were prescribed once every two weeks. Given the lack of sunlight in these parts (Vitamin D is essential to well-being and can only be manufactured by the body when sunlight falls on the skin for a brief period every day; it cannot be stored by the body) they seemed like a good idea.

We eventually made our way to Tesco, it being too late to call at Village Greens (the Prestwich equivalent of Unicorn) and came home for tea, which Jenny cooked while I put in the TV recordings for the week, reaching a convenient point to halt in the wee small hours.

### **Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> March**

We spent the day at Greenmount Old School working on the electrical jumble in preparation for the next sale on 26<sup>th</sup> March.

In the evening, I finished off putting in the TV recordings for the week.

### **Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> March**

I was on the computer for the early part of the morning, followed by Matthew and Carrie's Mother's Day treat of lunch at the village Miller and Carter with Carrie's parents, Bob and Marie. We all had an enjoyable lunch, my only and main course being Tandoori Marinated Lamb Rump, washed down with a modest glass of Shiraz and very tasty it was too.

In the afternoon, I settled down to more computer work, including fair-sized updates to both the village web site and the Tottington and District Civic Society web site. I had some serious work to do on the latter, to incorporate it into the Greenmount Village Web site, since the Tottington web site name (URL) was about to fade into oblivion in April.

All that saw my day end about 11:30 p.m.

### **Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> March**

I started off by dealing with the TV recordings from the previous evening and early this morning. That was followed by a major update to this blog. What a busy life I led.

We braved the wet weather, or, at least, the car did, journeying to our mid-day dental appointment for a routine check up.

After lunch, we made some Mandarin orange marmalade. The recipe we followed was not very accurate and we adjusted the water and sugar to the levels we had used for the Seville orange marmalade, reducing the water by about 25% and halving the sugar. Even then, the result was a little too sweet and I made a note that, if we made it again, to reduce the sugar even further. Adding the juice of two lemons, slightly more than the recipe required, helped somewhat.

The boiling time to setting point was a little longer than expected – around 30 minutes.

When we subsequently tried the marmalade at breakfast the following morning, it was tasty but I preferred the Seville.

I spent my evening on the redesign of my web site, the target being to finish it by the end of the month.

I also spent a good deal of time grappling with the log fire, which was quite temperamental and eventually went out at about 9:30 p.m. That didn't matter because it had raised the temperature sufficiently to override the central heating.

### **Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> March**

Jenny and Rachel spent the day in Bury. The original plan was to potter round Manchester but Jenny didn't feel too well so she settled for Bury.

I turned my attention to cutting more wood for the log fire, tackling some of the more difficult logs with cuts where branches had been. Because of the grain and wood density, these were extremely difficult to chop and I resorted to sawing them into smaller pieces before using the axe. Even then the axe kept becoming wedged and had to be freed using a rather large hammer. I did overcome the stubbornness of the logs and ended up with a day's supply of logs by the time I decided to pack up for lunch about 2 p.m.

After lunch and washing up, it was time to prepare the fire for lighting, making sure that it had enough kindling and a good draught to make it burn hot enough to deal with the larger logs.

### **Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> March**

I fixed Jenny's washing line and helped her hang out the bedding. Then I helped her sort out a few items in the garage and commenced wood cutting while she tidied up some of her car booty.

After a late lunch, we tidied up outside and I lit the fire, tending it in between working on the latest TV recordings, dealing with my E-mail and continuing the redesign of my web site.

### **Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> March**

We took some animal bedding (shredded paper) and some surplus cat food up to the

Bleakhoilt animal sanctuary and then stopped off at Ramsbottom to tour the charity shops on the return journey.

After another late lunch at home, the rest of the afternoon was more or less a repeat of the previous day.

### **Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> March**

It was a long grocery shopping day.

We started off with a long-overdue visit to Village Greens at Prestwich for a few items. We noticed they were trialling the bread from the Good Grain Bakery, which was organic and gluten-free. It was the best gluten-free bread I had ever tasted and I told them so.

We journeyed down to the chemist, Dennis Gore, in Prestwich. When I purchased what I thought were eye drops for Jenny the previous week, I picked up the Eyebright tincture instead and we called to exchange it. Unfortunately, they didn't have the drops in stock, so we left our details so they could contact us when the drops were back on the shelf and settled for a refund.

We took the back roads to Unicorn and our shop there was followed by a brief visit to Sainsbury's store in Sale before motoring on to Waitrose.

The items we purchased from Waitrose seemed to be dwindling visit by visit and we wondered whether it was worth continuing to go there. An alternative might be to shop at Waitrose online.

The journey home was painfully slow even though the improvements to the first section of the M60, where we joined it, were complete. What an utter waste of time and money that was.

It was 5 p.m. before we made it home, having called at Bargain Booze in Tottington for a couple of bottles of wine.

I spent my evening putting in the TV recordings for the week.

### **Saturday, 17<sup>th</sup> March**

We spent most of the day at the Old School, working on the electrical jumble and, for the first time ever, we seemed to have tested and priced everything there was to sell, leaving a few items that needed repairing.

We were home by mid-afternoon and I spent the rest of the day tidying up the recorded TV programmes we had watched during the previous week and, of course, listening to Jazz Record Requests.

## **Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> March**

It was a day of web site updates.

## **Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> March**

I was wood cutting in the morning and dealt with some rather large and very tough pieces of wood.

I tidied up as lunch was ready and lit the fire soon after. That started off being somewhat temperamental and I left off to have a look at a DAB radio one of our friends, Susan, brought down after calling to ask if I would look at it.

Jenny dealt with the fire and had it going well while I concluded that I couldn't fix the radio. I did manage to get it to briefly burst into life a couple of times and I established that it wouldn't work on mains power, with the rechargeable battery disconnected. My guess was that, although the battery appeared to be fully charged, it was faulty.

Since the radio was an old one, Susan said she would probably buy a new one rather than risk buying a new battery for the existing one and finding it still did not work. I agreed that was probably the better option.

## **Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> March**

I spent most of the day checking my tax, having received a message from the tax man that my tax code had changed. Working online, I could not find a detailed tax calculation for the previous year but from what I did find, it seemed the tax man had it more or less right.

## **Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> March**

We went to Bury. Jenny wanted a few items from various shops, finishing with the inevitable visit to Tesco.

Back home, I started to document the details of the village web site at Alistair's request.

## **Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March**

I cleaned the curtain rails and windows in the lounge and put up the curtains I had removed on Tuesday for washing.

Having commented online about not being able to access a detailed tax calculation for the previous year, a paper copy arrived in the post. All I had to do now was to recheck everything.

After lunch, I resumed the documentation of the village web site for Alistair.

### **Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March**

Our shopping day took us to the vet's practice in Bury for the cat's tablets, gel and renal food, Asda at Pilsworth, Unicorn in Chorlton, Waitrose at Broadheath and Bargain Booze in Tottington. The outward journey went well, averaging almost 60 miles to the gallon. The return trip was alright until we had just joined the M60 and then, despite the variable speed limit on the new "smart" motorway, we were down to a crawl and, had I not switched from the "fast lane" to the middle lane, we would have spent a good deal of time stationary. It later struck me that we didn't need a "smart" motorway, just smart drivers.

Fortunately, by adjusting the distance between my car and the vehicle in front, I was able to keep moving, at times passing vehicles in the "fast" lane. On the whole, we made good time and managed to keep our m.p.g. well above the average.

My evening was spent putting in all the TV recordings for the week.

### **Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> March**

We were at the Old School, dealing with the electrical jumble in preparation for the sale on Monday. There was not a lot of jumble left to test and price, having spent a few weekends previously dealing with the various items and it was mostly a case of unpacking and displaying what we had for sale. I also set up the two hi-fi systems I had repaired so that I could demonstrate them to prospective purchasers.

I did deal with a couple of new items and Jenny tested several new lamps and a few domestic appliances, leaving me to deal with the more technical ones.

We left about 5 p.m., with a handful of products for repairing and testing the following day.

### **Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> March**

The first job of the day was to put the clocks forward. Yes, folks, we were now on British Summer Time, latterly called Daylight Saving, probably because we didn't get much of a summer.

I went round to the Old School to finish off a few bits of electrical jumble, working at a leisurely pace since there wasn't a lot left to do. I was home for 3 p.m. after deciding to leave a Toshiba laptop that asked for a password as soon as it was powered up for the present.

This was the second Toshiba I had encountered with an unknown BIOS password. Was this a coincidence or is there a fault with Toshiba laptops that they suddenly and for no reason acquire an unknown and possibly random BIOS password? It's certainly a good way of making money – by charging a tidy sum to overcome the difficulty in the workshop. This has certainly taught me a lesson or two. First, don't buy a Toshiba machine. Second, never, ever set a BIOS password, just in case you forget it.

### **Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> March**

I went round to the Old School in the morning to deal with a few new items that had been brought in for the jumble sale and came home for a leisurely lunch. We were back at the Old School for the sale at 4 p.m. and then helped tidy up afterwards, keeping a good few unsold items for the Antiques and Collector's Fair in a week's time.

### **Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> March**

In the morning, we were back at the Old School where I was helping Frank with the DVDs and CDs in preparation for the Antiques and Collector's Fair. Jenny was helping unpack items in the hall.

We came home for lunch and I spent the afternoon working on the documentation of the Greenmount Village web site.

### **Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> March**

I thought I was expecting Alistair to discuss future arrangements for managing the village web site at 10:30 a.m. so I started tidying things up a bit in the lounge. When he didn't arrive, I telephoned him and it appeared we were meeting the following week. I had the wrong date in my diary.

We went round to the Old School to help with the preparation work again. Jenny came home early because she had arranged to meet Lorna and I carried on sorting the DVDs into alphabetical order. Jenny contacted me to say Lorna couldn't make it and she had decided to do something else instead so I arranged to come home for lunch about 1:30 p.m.

I arrived home for lunch just after 2 p.m. and went back to the Old School about 3 p.m. for another three hours, completing about half of the DVDs.

As we were about to have tea, Lorna arrived for a quick chat, which gave me the opportunity to update this diary of fascinating events.

### **Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> March**

We went to York for the day and walked by the river, pottered round the museum gardens and the lovely shops.

On returning, we had a take-away Chinese meal to round off a relaxing day.

### **Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> March**

We had a most relaxing drive down to Unicorn and back from Waitrose, thanks to the schools being on holiday, significantly reducing the number of vehicles on the roads.

## **Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> March**

I went round to the Old School to resume sorting the DVDs to find that Frank had done it. I came home and dealt with my E-mails that needed urgent attention before taking Jenny into Ramsbottom for her eye test at 12:20 only to discover that we were two hours or so too early.

We came home and I continued with my outstanding administration work until it was time to return for the eye test.

Eunice had called round earlier to ask if we would take some items to the Old School for her and, on returning home, we went to collect them, making two journeys with items for which she no longer had any use.

Jenny barely had time to prepare for our evening out before we had to leave for the Swan and Cemetery where we had booked a table for a meal to celebrate our 45<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We had an excellent meal and a most enjoyable evening.