

Greenmount – May 2007

The hot sunny weather and blue skies we have been experiencing for the last few days has given way to the norm and the rain and grey skies are back. That's the end of summer, then.

I have managed to tend the back lawn and it is improving considerably. I have also managed to tidy up the common land on the side after the council gardener (I think that must be his name, not his profession) rode round on his tractor, skimming the grass from the flatter parts and leaving the slopes like a Burmese jungle. It was looking rather nice until he came round again after heavy rain and left it looking like a ploughed field. Other local people have commented that I am much better at tending the area than the council employee and suggested I ought to cut all the grass on the side and across the road. I said I would if the council waived my council tax for doing so.

My illness lingered on as we entered May and, being the generous person I am, I gave it to Jenny. Fortunately for her and my appetite, it didn't last long.

My coughing aggravated my reflux problem and my doctor increased my Losec dosage to 20 mg per day to mop up the excess stomach acid. Unfortunately, this didn't work and I have been in considerable discomfort. My doctor again doubled my Losec intake and I have had a blood test. I am next due to see the doctor on 4th June and if matters have not improved, I get to swallow a rather large fibre-optic device to observe my bodily functions from the inside. Having had three of these before, only two of which entered through the mouth, the other I leave to your imagination, this is an event about which I am not over enthusiastic.

After weeks of counting the mileage down to its next service, the car suddenly decided that, from wanting one in 200 miles, it wanted immediately. It went in on 12th May and the same service cost me £50 more than last time, about 18 months ago. The mechanic had problems with a nipple but that's another story. Apparently, the off-side rear break calliper nipple is seized and any attempt to force it might cause it to snap off, which would mean a new calliper. The mechanic said everything was fine and I should leave it until the next service. I've heard that before.

Our regular dental check-up was due the same day and, as usual, Jenny required a polish and I require a filling, which is booked in for 20th July. The dentist is booked up until then.

On 13th May, we visited a second cousin, who I have discovered as part of my family history research, in Gainsborough. The trip was most worthwhile and I now have more certificates and photographs relating to the Dearden family and an address in Spain for another second cousin. Olè. I have contacted them and they would like to meet us when they are over here in December.

On 14th May it was back to the dentist with a chipped molar, courtesy of a chicken bone left in the salad lunch. It took about ten minutes for the dentist to dress the tooth and provide a temporary filling until my visit in July. All this she did without

anaesthetic, which gave me an excellent opportunity to examine her ceiling at close quarters.

On 24th May, Matthew decided he wanted to register his BSA trials bike he has purchased from his manager, a motorcycle enthusiast. I suspect his intention is to have a spare bike for occasions when his Yamaha is off the road, in this case, temporarily due to a puncture in the rear tyre. Those of us with cars settle for a spare wheel. Registration requires that he first has his motorcycle tested to ensure it is roadworthy (MOT).

Since I have not yet had a towing bracket fitted to my more recent VW Golf and having parted with the old one, we prevailed upon a good friend and neighbour to tow a hired bike trailer to the MOT test garage on the following day. The bike failed its MOT because the new front tyre is not legal for road use and the new rear tyre has been fitted the wrong way round. Well done ATS. The good news is that if Matthew takes it back within ten days, the retest will cost a lot less than a repeat full test. There is, of course, the issue of transporting the bike to the MOT test garage again. Guess who is getting a towing bracket fitted on 4th June.

More good news is that Matthew had a new tyre fitted to the rear wheel of his Yamaha while his trials bike was undergoing its MOT and that is now useable.

Both the chap at the test centre and the man at the trailer hire company recommended the M&M Auto Centre in Bury for tyres for his BSA, so Matthew went there on 26th May.

Enraged at the news that the Government is still pursuing its intention to build a new generation of nuclear power stations, I have sent an E-mail to ITV's Tonight programme suggesting they investigate the nuclear industry and I have also sent them what little research I have done so far. Somebody has to stop this maniacal bunch of bureaucrats before it is too late. Can you really trust a PM and a political party that lied about events leading to the war in Iraq with nuclear waste that remains toxic for tens of thousands of years? Or is this me being paranoid?

I have had a modicum of success at the BBC. A representative for the "Jazz Record Requests" programme on BBC Radio 3 E-mailed me in to say they were playing Bourbon Street Parade for me on 2nd June.

On Monday 28th May we headed for Whitby on the North Yorkshire coast for four nights. Although it was a Bank Holiday, the traffic was not as heavy as I expected, probably due to the bad weather forecast for the week and we arrived in time for lunch, which we had packed before leaving. Our accommodation was excellent and the only problem would have been finding a parking space had we not arrived as another guest was leaving, the lady of the house saving the spot for us.

We spent Monday pottering round Whitby in the cold, strong, north-easterly wind. We were lucky enough to attend a performance of the local amateur rep, "House Guest" by Francis Durbridge, at the Pavillion Theatre in the evening, having partaken of a very nice and reasonably-priced meal at the Hatless Heron restaurant in the old town.

The weather was still looking doubtful and was still cold on Tuesday as we headed for Pickering on the steam train. By the time we arrived, there were blue skies and sunshine and the whole experience was most enjoyable. The evening turned cool as we headed for the very excellent and equally expensive Ditto restaurant.

Wednesday started off bright with a cool breeze and we walked the six mile coast path to Robin Hood's Bay. The guide describes the path as "fairly flat, undulating in parts". It lied. There were a couple of challenging, short, steep drops and climbs. The guide goes on to describe the remaining 14 miles to Scarborough as having "three steep climbs". Having consumed lunch at the Old Bakery, we decided to catch the bus back from Robin Hood's Bay. The weather forecast for cloud and rain also lied. Sun and blue skies prevailed.

The Wednesday evening meal at the Pakastani Rafiq restaurant cannot be described as a success. The food was good, except that my Chicken Madras tasted more like a Vindaloo and Jenny's main course of Tandoori Chicken was served as a starter portion. Since there was obviously a language problem (if they can't understand me, there is no hope for the many visitors from Tyneside) and the bill was more or less right for what we had eaten, we didn't bother to complain.

The weather continued to improve on Thursday as we pottered around Whitby and went for a boat trip in the old life boat around Whitby Bay. We had an excellent Italian meal at Mootrey's restaurant, booked the night before.

Friday proved to be the best day for weather and we spent the morning walking along the new sea defences to the west of the town (although Whitby is on the East Coast, the bay actually faces north) before heading home.

Which takes us into June and the next thrilling instalment of our daily existence.