

Greenmount – May 2009

The first enthralling event of the month took place on Friday 8th May when I joined Jenny and Rachel at the Scout AGM. I went to take some pictures of the displays, prepared for the benefit of parents and depicting the activities of Beavers, Cubs, Scouts etc.

The local diving school was there, drumming up trade, having hosted a session for one of the groups. I tried the breathing apparatus and am thinking of taking the plunge – at least for a trial session – to see if I like it and can breath underwater, this being something of a bonus when diving.

On the 14th, I had an appointment with my consultant for the results of my stomach biopsy and to try to find out what is causing my stomach problem. My wait in the clinic was the briefest yet and I found myself discussing my results with a very nice, if somewhat tall, young lady. To be succinct, I am relieved to say there is nothing seriously wrong with me. After a thorough examination and discussing the symptoms, she concluded that I am suffering from gastritis (excessive stomach acid) and possibly Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

And now for the advice.

First, keep taking the tablets, if they help. They do and I am. So that's 2 x 20 mg of Losec daily, before breakfast. Yum!

Second, avoid things that aggravate the problem and do more of the things that alleviate it. I need a doctor to tell me that?

Anyway, knowing I am fine helps and it is a case of managing the symptoms as and when they occur.

In the evening of the 14th, I joined Jenny and Rachel at their Beaver meeting. This was a special event, involving a visit to St. Anne's Church, Tottington, for the Beaver Faith Activity Badge and I went along to take some photographs. We were treated to a fascinating talk about the church by one of the local lay preachers, Bridge Parks, who, a few years ago, performed the service for Jenny's sister's (Marie's) funeral.

We did approach the vicar to take the Beaver session but he was far too busy taking his son to cricket. He made some excuse when we asked him to perform the ceremony for Marie. This must be the only church where parishioners are not a priority.

I have been working on a programme of events for Tottington District Civic Society, holding an Environment and Community week from 31st May to 7th June. I performed the initial formatting prior to submitting it to the printers. It seems that the Society, a registered charity, has acquired some funding. Unfortunately, none of it is coming my way.

I have contacted the shop supplying our new fireplace and wood burning stove. All of the items we ordered are now in stock and we are waiting for the builder to commence work, knocking a huge hole in the lounge wall and building an inglenook and

chimney. Apparently, he is busy wrecking someone else's house at the moment and is expected to start work here around the end of the month. I can't wait. I hope he remembers to disconnect the existing gas fire first.

I have managed to break the toiled seat cover in the bathroom, simply by sitting on it. I related the incident to Jenny and Rachel to cries of "Fat Sod".

I have had success on two fronts this month, which makes a nice change.

First, I have successfully repaired a pair of earphones belonging to a tape cassette player, borrowed by Rachel from the University for her research project and which I dragged off the table onto the floor by tripping over the power lead a month or so ago. Fortunately, the accident only damaged the plug on the earphones and I have obtained a new mini-, mono-jack plug and soldered it in place after much fiddling with small wires and cursing.

Second, I have bought a Bosch Professional (the description is of the Bosch range of power tools and not the user of them) jig saw at an excellent price from someone I know who works for a trade tool supplier and I have used this in anger to facilitate the positioning of the old kitchen sink in the old kitchen units in the garage. The tricky part is plumbing in the sink and making provision for the second and second-hand automatic washer in the garage, used to wash the less desirable items such as the cats' blankets. Once properly installed, the cats can sleep snugly in their beds.

There is a rumour that we are scheduled for a warmer and drier summer than average this year, whatever that means. I don't think the message has yet reached the heavens. Following a brief spell of warm weather, when we were able to lunch outside on the patio, we have reached the stage when the diving lessons will come in useful. We have had at least a week of heavy rain showers and thunderstorms with no sign of improvement. Going out is more a case of wearing flippers than wellingtons.

The Bank Holiday week end turned into something of a disaster. On Saturday 23rd May we went to the organic butchers in Bolton for a leg of lamb. He didn't have one. We came away with an expensive duck and two very large pork chops and said we would be back the following Wednesday, after the next delivery, for the leg of lamb.

We arrived back for lunch and then dashed off to see the flypast of a Dakota in Ramsbottom, arranged as part of the war week end by the East Lancashire Railway Company. The place was packed and we had difficulty parking. While looking for somewhere to park, the Dakota flew by and I missed it. We wandered round, taking pictures of the various people dressed up in 1940s clothes, some in military uniform, both English and German. When we got back to the car, we had acquired a parking ticket. I was not best pleased.

On Sunday, we were up at the crack of dawn to go to a car boot sale at Bury Cricket Club, only to discover on arrival that all the places were taken. We came back home and I did some gardening, wondering what else could go wrong.

During one of my rest periods, growing more frequent with the passing years, I sat down in one of the patio folding chairs and it collapsed. Fortunately, the chair suffered more damage than did I. More cries of “Fat Sod” filled the air.

For those keeping score, that’s one toilet seat and one patio chair to me.

The chair was one acquired for a few pence from the local jumble sale, so its disappearance to the local refuse tip will be no great loss, except that I have no reclining chair on which to relax after eating my lunch outside on the patio.

On a positive note, once again, the sun was shining, the sky was blue and the birds were singing. At least that’s not taxed. Yet.

The following morning, we attended another car boot sale in a pub car park in the local village of Walshaw and this time we made sure we were there early. We were the first to arrive. We sat around for a while wondering if we had the right spot and if anyone else would turn up and, one by one other vehicles arrived, much to our relief. It was a slow start and prospective customers were thin on the ground, although trade was steady throughout the morning and we made a reasonable amount, almost enough to cover the parking ticket and Jenny’s trip to the hairdresser a week or so previously.

Saturday 30th saw the first event on the local Environment Week programme, with free entry to the village cricket match, which, thankfully, I managed to avoid and we made the usual Saturday tour of the charity shops in Ramsbottom.

Sunday 31st gave us the opportunity to walk with the local Ranger along some of the many footpaths in the Kirklees Valley, about five minutes from our front door. The walk commenced and finished in Tottington, so we ended up making the fifteen minute walk there first and then back home again afterwards.

On arriving back home, we were beckoned by our neighbour across the back, Albert, who informed us that Lisel, a widow of German extraction who lived next door to him and occupied the house directly behind ours, moved into a home for the elderly in Tottington at her own request on the previous Friday evening. It seems she can no longer care for herself and her mental state has deteriorated. She has not been the same since her husband died quite suddenly in his sleep in the chair in the back garden during the summer quite a few years ago. Their only son, Martin, is sorting out her affairs.

We are very sorry to see this sad turn of events. Lisel, her husband, Ron and Martin were here when we moved in and we have known them for over thirty years.

After our little chat, we just had time for a quick lunch before the second walk of the day. We made our way across the golf course to Redisher Woods, where we met the group led by Mike Woolford and Christine Taylor for a five mile trek entitled “Moorland Magic”, covering some of the route, across Holcombe Moor, depicted on the DVD of the same name and of which copies are still available for purchase. If you would like a copy, send me an E-mail for details. On returning to the Old School, we were treated to tea and cakes and a viewing of the DVD, which, by now, I know by heart.

That brings this episode completely up to date at the time of writing and next month's enthralling instalment will contain a report of the rest of the Environment Week, with details of my muddy feet, carpets, the last remaining, nineteenth-century, steam-driven mill and bats. And you will be by the time you've read it.