

Greenmount – May 2011

The month started in style at 5:15 a.m. on Sunday 1st May as our legs defied good sense and we rose for another day of standing in the sun and wind at a car boot sale at the station car park in Ramsbottom. The station is on the heritage line of the East Lancashire Railway, which operates many different types of engine, including steam locomotives, bringing in waves of customers every hour. This week end was very busy, being a “Thomas the Tank Engine” week end. Thanks to a pleasant day that included a few large sales, we again made a modest sum.

On Tuesday 2nd May we had a lie-in until 08:30. Luxury. We were round at the Old School by just after 10 a.m. to help prepare for the Big Village Party. It was a lovely sunny day, with a blue sky and a cool, easterly wind. Jenny and I spent the morning ferrying items to and fro between the Old School and the field adjacent to the Cricket Club and helping prepare for the Teddy Bear’s Picnic. Not that teddy bears eat a lot. As we left for lunch, I resolved to use the trailer at the end of the day to retrieve all the tables, chairs, etc.

After a brief lunch, Jenny walked back to the Old School while I emptied the car of all the previous day’s car boot stock, extracted the trailer from the garage, pumped up the tyres and drove round, parking the car and trailer in the grounds. Jenny went to help with more preparation work and I wandered round in my high visibility jacket, looking official and taking pictures for the web site. I reached the field as the picnic was starting.

The free, non-profit-making event went very well and was well attended, resulting in the Village Community banking a tidy sum. The Village Community is indebted to the local firm for the loan of a trailer we used as a stage for the musical groups, as well as to the entertainers themselves, who freely gave their time and the Cricket Club, which ran out of two lines of beer, for the use of its facilities. The Bull’s Head also ran out of food and it would be nice if the manager and brewery showed more interest in such village activities.

When it came time to pack up, I fetched the trailer down to the Cricket Club and there wasn’t an official sole to be seen – apart from Alistair, the Chairman of our group, who was eating and chatting with some friends. I ended up collecting two car and trailer loads of items, taking it back to the Old School, unloading everything and storing all the items, almost single-handed apart from assistance at the field from Liz from the Waggon and Horses at Hawkshaw and another gentleman whose name I forget, who came to help collect chairs and tables, Graham at the Old School who took some of the chairs upstairs for me and Jenny who helped unpack and store some of the lighter items.

Meanwhile, Jenny, at the Old School, together with several other helpers (the one’s who usually do all the work) was fetching and carrying, helping to tidy up ready for the use of the hall by Playgroup the following morning.

After that, we went home and I sank into the chair to watch the closing session of the snooker with a beer while Jenny prepared tea. That was about 7 p.m.

Neither of us was best pleased that so many people in high visibility jackets became invisible after the event and, on reflection (not from the jackets), the detailed planning could have been better and more help with tidying up afterwards, particularly on the field, was needed.

On Tuesday 3rd May, we had another, much-needed lie-in until 9:30. We were both aching somewhat, Jenny more than I, having been lifting, carrying and on our feet for most of the past three days. So I decided to cut the grass and hoe the borders while Jenny undertook household chores, before disappearing off to Yoga for more torture in the afternoon.

On 4th May we walked to Bury and back. The object of the exercise was to see how much progress Bury Council had made with the development of the Kirklees Trail, a footpath and cycle route between Greenmount and Bury along the route of the old railway track and to do some shopping.

Our success rate was about 25% which, coincidentally, is about the degree of progress Bury Council appear to have made. I did take some pictures of a chap operating a digging machine before he made a gesture which we interpreted as meaning we shouldn't actually be on the site. A couple of chaps were working hard at chatting in a van, drinking tea and I asked if there was any chance of getting closer to the viaduct that is being built to take some more pictures. I was directed to a lady in an office who seemed to be glued to her mobile telephone.

As an added bonus from the day's outing, I ended up with two nasty blisters on the underside of my little toes and these subsequently, for a few days, made walking very painful.

On 6th May we went grocery shopping to Unicorn and, just for a change, Asda at Pillsworth, which was even more devoid of organic meat than Tesco at Prestwich usually is. The afternoon was spent with more preparation for the Beavers' Sleepover at the Old School that evening, which Jenny organised this year to obtain her Nights Away Permit. I actually managed to cook my own tea.

I rose early (7:30) on 7th May to prepare breakfast for Jenny and Rachel, who returned about 9 a.m. This was a pretty straight forward task since it did not involve any cooking.

Newton's of Bury delivered our reupholstered dining chairs and we then drove up to Todmorden to find a co-operative grocery shop, similar to Unicorn but more expensive. Obviously workers in Todmorden are less co-operative than in Chorlton. Perhaps it's because they're Yorkshire folk. I should know.

We purchased a number of organic items we cannot obtain elsewhere (Unicorn does not stock anything containing sugar), including some golden syrup and black treacle. I can now have some home-made, organic parkin (ginger cake). Yum. I did not find any organic brown sauce, an item we have not had for several months, ever since Tesco stopped supplying it. The makers, Granovita have sent me a list of their local product stockists, two of which no longer exist, one has moved and doesn't stock it and the fourth's wholesaler doesn't supply it.

To say we rose in the morning of 8th May is just about right as we strolled downstairs about 11:30. I think Jenny was suffering from Beaver-lag. Either that or it was the bottle of red wine we had the night before.

Being warm, sunny and windy, Jenny did some more washing and I put up a second clothes line for her to play with. Afterwards, she put in a beef casserole for tea while I washed all the pots and caught up on some Beaver documentation with Rachel.

Between 9th and 20th May, life was fairly routine, if such is ever the case here. I was absent from my usual Davros position, in front of my PC, due to a very sore bum yet again, resulting in more treatment with the dreaded steroid, anti-fungal cream and another appointment with the doctor being booked.

On 21st May, Jenny and Rachel disappeared off to a Beaver 25th Anniversary Fun Day with the Beavers at Ashworth Valley and I had a day of peace and quiet, generally tidying round. My four major achievements of the day were re-stringing the washing lines, resulting in three, hanging out the bedding to dry, making my own lunch and fetching the dry bedding in again before it rained. On returning from the Beaver Fun Day, Jenny was too tired to prepare tea and Rachel kindly treated us to a meal at the Bull's Head.

Sunday 22nd May was very windy, cold and wet, with no sign of the scorching hot spell recently mentioned in the papers. That comes as no surprise. There is always news of a scorching hot summer and it's always a wash-out.

We went to see Matthew and Carrie and to check on their greenhouse, which is full of promising edibles. On the way, we nipped into Bury to pick up a new lens cap for my wide-angle lens, having lost the original one while out on a village tidy-up some time ago. The replacement bit of plastic cost me £7. Meanwhile, Jenny found this opportunity too good to miss and was off round the shops faster than a Yorkshireman chases money.

I cancelled my doctor's appointment for Tuesday 24th May on the basis that the copious amounts of raw garlic I had been consuming for several days previously were having an effect – mostly on others within a considerable radius. I took the car in for a service instead.

From then on, towards the end of the month, events took a turn for the worse and my affliction became progressively more aggressive or aggressively more progressive, whichever sounds more appropriate.

If you want to know how I survived into June, read next month's thrilling episode.