

Greenmount May 2018

Tuesday, 1st May 2018

We resumed our walk round Flamborough Head, just missing the 8:55 bus and hanging around, waiting for the 9:55. We used the time productively to try to organise the order of some tablets for our cat but a major stumbling block was that we didn't have the vet's number so we asked Rachel to do it instead, which she later confirmed she had done.

The bus dropped us at the access road to Dane's Dyke. I had asked the driver if he would drop us there when we boarded and he suggested we ring the bell in case he forgot. I explained I didn't know exactly where the stop was. Fortunately, a very helpful gentleman who boarded the bus with us and chatted to us said he would tell me when to ring the bell. That worked fine.

We walked down the road to the car park at Dane's Dyke and resumed our walk where we had left off the previous Thursday. We made good time to South Landing and, despite three or four descents on steps to cross inlets in the cliffs on short bridges and then stepped ascents, we did well to reach the lighthouse in about 1½ hours.

We had taken some bits to eat and some bottled water and we had a snack on a bench overlooking the sea, not wishing to use the café again. We had about half an hour's rest before continuing and reached North Landing in under an hour. That was where we waited for the bus back to Bridlington, due at 2:20 and some five to ten minutes late.

North Landing is not a place I would wish to visit again. The café was closed so we couldn't get a cup of tea. The adjoining pub was open, as was the hotel up the road but they weren't the sort of places for which we were looking. The bus shelter needed some TLC and the bus stop had no sign on it, just a timetable. It didn't have any seating either. We were not impressed.

The bus eventually reached the bus station after waiting at a stop on the way for about ten minutes for a relief driver.

Since we were back early, we decided to have a look at the new shopping mall, just across from the bus station. The mall was very nice with some decent shops and, together with new the Premier Inn in which we stayed, was the kind of investment and improvement the town needed.

Bridlington had a lot to offer and needed more investment and improvement to attract more visitors.

Our visit to the mall resulted in us finding Costa Coffee and we had a gluten-free snack there with a pot of tea each, not being able to find any decent tea rooms anywhere else.

We walked back along the promenade, watching the tide lash the sea wall as it came in. Jenny took the opportunity to nip onto the beach and collect some pebbles to take home before the tide was fully in at that point.

We came back to the hotel room to shower and pack up, preparing for our departure after breakfast the following day.

Wednesday, 2nd May 2018

There was a very wet start to the day. We started packing the car before breakfast and finished off afterwards, checked out early and headed for home. I had intended to follow the outward route in reverse but decided to take a more direct route towards Malton and the A64. We made good time and the cat was pleased to see us. The weather had improved as we came down the west side of the Pennine hills and it was quite pleasant at home.

After dumping our luggage and a comfort break, we headed for Tesco in Bury (where else?) for a quick shop, having a late lunch on returning.

I spent the rest of the afternoon sorting out all the TV recordings I had left on the two computers and all had been recorded without a hitch.

Thursday, 3rd May 2018

I started by cutting the grass on the back lawn, trimming the edges, cleaning the cat's latrine and hoeing the borders, not that they needed much attention.

I came in to do something for Jenny on the computer and ended up spending time responding to an E-mail, completing a survey for the Premier Inn.

I was about to resume work outside at the front when Jenny said lunch was ready, so I tidied up and had my leak and mushroom pie with beans.

After lunch, we walked down to Bury to fetch the cat's tablets from the vet. We caught the 474 bus back, walking about half a mile back to the village from the nearest stop.

I resumed my administration work, dealing with snail mail and updating my monthly diary.

Friday, 4th May 2018

Since we were extremely low on groceries, following our holiday, we did a rather large shop at Unicorn in Chorlton, Sainsburys in Sale and Waitrose in Broadheath, near Altrincham, lunching on gluten-free sandwiches at the latter.

Since we set off early, we were back by mid-afternoon, encountering slow-moving traffic on the M60 on the return journey. The new, smart motorway was definitely not working. One would have thought that our transport ministry would have learned from other sections of "smart" motorway, the M62 around Leeds being a case in point, that they were a complete waste of

money and did not improve matters. But, no, they hadn't and continued to throw tax-payers money at them. Still, it kept the oil companies happy.

Saturday, 5th May 2018

In the morning, we went round to the village drop-in at the Old School, working on the electrical jumble for the next sale.

After lunch, Jenny and Rachel packed the car for the following day's car booting while I updated the village web site, my web site and caught up with my E-mail.

Sunday, 6th May 2018

We were up at 4:30 a.m. and at our usual car boot pitch at Ramsbottom Station car park just after 6 a.m. There were already a number of traders setting up their stalls on this lovely sunny morning, with temperatures set to rise well into the twenties.

Trading was slow, to say the least. We packed up early in order to go down to Matthew and Carrie's house for a barbecue in the afternoon in celebration of Bob's (his father-in-law's) birthday on the 10th May.

We were home for 2 p.m., had a quick wash and changed, then Rachel offered to give us a lift and dropped us at Matthew and Carrie's house about 3 p.m.

We met up with Matt, Carrie and Bob and Marie and had a very pleasant afternoon, sitting in the garden, chatting, sipping wine and consuming a veritable feast of various meats, vegetable kebabs and jacket potatoes.

We came home, cashed up our day's takings and found we had made a modest profit. Rachel and Jenny prepared the car for another car boot sale the following day while I just caught up on more administrative work.

Monday, 7th May 2018

We were up at 5 a.m. for another long day. Jenny and Rachel tootled off to do another hard day's trading at the car boot sale in Ramsbottom and I had a more leisurely start to the day until Tracey collected me at 8:30 a.m. to help put out the road closure and diversion signs for the village party.

First we had to load the signs, cones and sandbags on the lorry, collecting them from the cricket club then we travelled round installing them, which afforded me the opportunity to drive the lorry. Then we had to collect the barriers to erect across the roads to finally close them off. All that took about an hour.

It was amazing to see vehicles still trying to go down the closed roads and then the drivers gaze in awe at the barriers before cursing under their breath and performing a U-turn. Perhaps drivers should face a compulsory, annual MOT as well as their car with emphasis on the eyes and the brain.

After completing the road closures, we went to the Canon Lewis Hall on Longsight Road to collect some extra folding tables for the stalls on the village green. There some confusion set in as to who wanted the tables and where and that took some sorting out.

By the time we reached Ron and Irene's house to collect the tombola prizes and ferry them down to the village green, it was approaching noon and I walked home for lunch, leaving Tracey, Ron and Irene to deal with the prizes.

It had been an interesting and educational morning.

After lunch, I headed off with my camera, having changed out of my scruffy gear and into something more presentable, at 1 p.m. to make sure I was in good time for the official opening of the new playground on the village green by our Mayor, Dorothy Gunther. I took a few pictures on the way.

After photographing the memorable moment, I wandered round, chatting to people and taking more pictures, including the large number of people on the village green, the children's fairground on the Cricket Club car park and all the stalls on the road. I was fortunate to be at the Lancashire Bat Group stall as two bats that were not able to be released back into the wild and which were cared for by the Bat Group were being shown to people round the stall. I had seen and photographed these before but they were such lovely and fascinating creatures of which I never tired.

From there I took some photographs in the Old School of the mini collector's fair. The crowd of people that had been in earlier had thinned out somewhat by the time I reached there.

My last visit was to the church, in which there was a display of local artists' work.

By this time, about 3:30 p.m., I was flagging in the heat and made my way home for a nice cool shower and a relaxing evening.

It had been a lovely sunny day and I had met and talked to so many nice people. Everyone seemed to have enjoyed the big village party. It made all the hard work that the many volunteers had put into it worthwhile.

Tuesday, 8th May 2018

I spent most of the day, until it started to rain, in the garden, mainly cutting the grass at the front and tidying up the side border. The chaps who were contracted to cut the grass on the public areas turned up for the second time this season and they were well overdue. The grass was quite long. They made a good job of it.

I spent the rest of the day dealing with my holiday pictures, starting to put them on the web site.

Wednesday, 9th May 2018

I started the day by washing the car. It was well overdue and very dirty. Jenny was taking Gwen down to Summerseat Garden centre for lunch at noon and I was finished in good time for that.

I tidied up and, on attending a call of nature, discovered that the toilet roll in the bathroom needed changing. There was no spare roll in the bathroom so I took a couple from the small toilet and put one in the cupboard behind the roll holder, intending to put the second one on the roller. Now I would not normally mention this, since it was a fairly routine task, except that on this occasion I discovered that the spring-loaded, plastic spindle holding the roll would not fully extend.

Further examination revealed that, for some reason it was sticking and after some time and trying various means of freeing it, it only became worse. I decided to consign it to the rubbish and Jenny found a spare, wooden one on an old pot toilet roll holder in the car boot stock and I used that. It was not an exact fit but would do for the present.

The plan was to see the local wood turners to see if they could make me a wooden replacement for the original spindle, using it as a guide.

I then drilled out the bolt holes in the legs of the new folding table we used for car boot sales. The bolts that held the legs in place when the table was erected were a tight fit in the holes and they needed to be about a millimetre in diameter larger.

Another job done, I put everything away in the garage and came in for lunch.

I spent the afternoon working on the photographs of our holiday for the family web site, expecting rain about 3 p.m. It did rain but not until later, not persistently and not a lot.

Thursday, 10th May 2018

I finished the update to the revised version of my web site. This version was not ready for publication.

I turned my attention to the village web site before leaving off for lunch and then we went down to the Cricket Club to help set up the room for the following day's D-CaFF dementia café.

Friday, 11th May 2018

In the morning, I continued the update to the village web site, leaving off about 12:30 p.m. to go to the Cricket Club for the D-CaFF dementia café. This afternoon, we celebrated the second anniversary of the café with a theme of "All Aboard the Blackpool Belle". As people arrived and

were seated, they were offered ice-cream cones. The slide/video presentation about Blackpool included a ride on the pleasure-beach roller-coaster and it was extremely good and entertaining. That was followed by sandwiches and cakes, with tea or coffee and a dancing exhibition, after which everyone was invited to take to the dance floor.

We came home about 4 p.m. and I resumed work on the village web site.

Saturday, 12th May 2018

We went grocery shopping to Prestwich (Village Greens and Tesco) in the morning and, after lunch, I spent the afternoon updating the village web site, finally publishing the changes about 10 p.m.

Sunday, 13th May 2018

The weather forecast was good and we were up at 4:30 a.m., making our car boot spot for about 6:15 a.m.

It was cooler than we expected. Nonetheless, we set out our stall and made our pitch money before 9:30 a.m., which was good going. Our good fortune continued and with some sizeable sales, we had one of the best days ever and our stock dwindled.

We were home for about 3:45 and, after placing a grocery order to Abel and Cole, I spent the rest of the afternoon finishing last week's Radio Times crossword, updating this blog and finishing off inputting the TV recordings for the coming week.

Monday, 14th May 2018

It was a lovely day with a blue sky and not a cloud in sight. The cool northerly wind kept temperatures down.

I started my day by tightening all three washing lines for Jenny. Jenny said the back lawn needed cutting so I cut the grass and trimmed the edges. I also cut the grass on the front and on the side nearest the borders to tidy it up a bit. Jenny sorted her car boot stock.

We had lunch on the picnic bench and the parasol came out for the first time this year. I was pleased to discover it did have a tilt facility, to angle it towards the sun, after all.

After lunch, I dealt with the dead wood on the fruit bushes that had spread to the side border on the other side of the garden fence and then attacked the ivy along the garage wall to stop it growing into the roof space. That was a messy job since I had to work my way along the wall behind the rhododendron bush, the gauze bush and other bushes growing along the side of the garage wall, so I came out covered in dead foliage and such. Jenny bravely checked me over for livestock.

Still feeling quite energetic and driven on by the lovely weather, I started to tackle the ivy growing through the fence from our neighbour's property at the back. I did not want this invading the garden and I regularly cut it back using the secateurs. On this occasion, I had just started when I took a slice off the end of my left index finger. Needless to say I didn't damage the secateurs.

I came in and washed the cut in hot, soapy water with blood squirting in every direction. That could only be described as agony. Having cleaned the wound, I ran it under cold water on Jenny's advice, applying pressure to the cut to stem the bleeding. Five minutes or so of that seemed to show signs of slowing down the loss of blood and I decided a trip to the local, nearby surgery was probably unnecessary. A wad of cotton wool to soak up the blood and dry off my finger also seemed to improve matters – until the blood seeped through to the outside. More pressure and a little while later, I removed the wad to observe the progress. It was improving. Jenny covered it with Savlon and applied a plaster round the end of my finger and then another one over the top of my finger to make sure the first one was held firmly in place. By now, the pain had also gone.

I tidied up outside, keeping the injured digit well out of the way, put out the empty boxes, most of which were in the garage loft, to return to Abel and Cole when the driver delivered our order the following morning, helped Jenny finish off tidying up and came in to rest.

Tuesday, 15th May 2018

It was another, beautiful sunny day with very little cloud (two in succession must be something of a record for this part of the country) and I started it a little later than Jenny, who was up at about 6:30 tending to the cat, which had been sick. This did happen from time to time and we put it down to her age and possibly a bad reaction to her thyroid medication. She was fine afterwards and tucked into her breakfast.

After breakfast, I spent a little time on the redesign of my web site before heading off with my hoe to the Incredible Edible plot to help Donna, the main objective being to plant some pea and bean seedlings. Jenny went to meet the girls for lunch at Summerseat Garden Centre.

I came home about 12:15 for lunch, which I ate in the conservatory. I did think of going outside and sitting on the picnic bench but I didn't really want to sit in the sun and I couldn't be bothered to deploy the parasol again.

After lunch, I continued with the work on my website redesign.

Wednesday, 16th May 2018

We walked into Ramsbottom and toured the charity shops where I purchased a DVD of "A Clockwork Orange" and the complete second series of "Waking the Dead", already having the first one.

We caught the bus home for lunch and afterwards I spent the afternoon sorting out both my DVD and CD collections, making sure I have everything catalogued so that I didn't make the mistake of buying something in the future I already had.

The pile of DVDs we had not yet watched and CDs to which we had not listened was growing rapidly and, since we only spent a couple of hours a day watching TV, so was the list of recorded programmes not yet viewed.

Thursday, 17th May 2018

We had yet another fine day, with sunny periods, although a cold wind kept the temperature down.

I spent the day in the garden, first resuming work on the ivy along the fence between our property and the house next door. I managed to cut it back so it did not encroach on our garden and without snipping the end of my finger. The finger I had cut a couple of days previous was healing slowly but still very sore and sensitive so I kept it covered with a plaster under the gardening gloves.

When I was satisfied I had cut as much of the ivy as I could reach, which was enough for my purpose, I turned my attention to sorting out the gardening items we kept under the raised beds. Since these were always outside, there was nothing of any significant value and worth stealing.

That was a messy job and very hard work, much of it on my knees, getting quite intimate with a variety of wildlife including wood lice, black clocks, several spiders, worms (most of which I picked up and put in the raised beds) and snails (most of which I carefully picked up and dumped in our compost bin). I had to take out all the items from under the beds, sweep and shovel away three or four barrow-loads of leaves and dirt and then put everything back. The pot plant-pots (as opposed to the plastic ones) were extremely heavy and the large ones difficult to manoeuvre.

I finished about 4 p.m., feeling absolutely shattered and thinking what else needed doing in the garden. I probably needed another week of fine weather to finish the routine jobs and then another week to take on some long-needed projects like painting the outside light at the back and block-paving the patch on the lawn under the picnic bench. And then there were the indoor jobs. Remember the decorating?

Friday, 18th May 2018

We made an early start on our weekly grocery shop, reaching Unicorn in Chorlton by just after 11 a.m., having called for some plants at Chorlton nursery and we reached Waitrose in Broadheath by about 12:30. So far so good, and, leaving Waitrose at 2:30 p.m., I expected a fairly trouble-free journey home. Not a chance of it.

We reached the tail-end of a traffic jam on the M60 just before the approach to the Ship Canal bridge, discovering it was due to a broken-down vehicle in the nearside lane over the bridge. A brief stretch of reaching fifth gear brought us to another jam on the approach to the M62 junction. After that, it was busy but at least we speeded up a bit.

These delays resulted in us reaching Bury just as the schools were turning out and that was a complete nightmare with parents ferrying their children home. When I was at grammar school, the vast majority of kids used to walk to school and back and my journey was a good two to three miles each way. We all had legs in those days. Apart from the odd few whose parents were starting the present trend, those who lived further away from school caught the bus.

After a brief rest at home, we went out to bed in our morning's plant purchases with a raised bed growing lettuce and spinach, another raised bed growing strawberries and runner beans in a large pot.

After tea, I had the pleasure of watering the garden and the new plants.

Saturday, 19th May 2018

We had a morning at the Old School working on the electrical jumble and had our packed lunch there before tidying up and coming home, bringing a Windows 7 laptop that had been donated to the jumble home so I could prepare it for sale.

Jenny had a brief rest while I worked on the laptop and then we packed the car for the following day's car boot sale.

I continued work on the laptop and listened to Jazz Record Requests before tea.

Sunday, 20th May 2018

A 4:30 a.m. start saw us at our usual car boot pitch in Ramsbottom for about 6:20 and it was already fairly busy with traders. We set out our stall and we had, again, made our pitch money of £11 by about 9:30 a.m., which was pretty good going considering that there were very few people around other than traders before 9:30.

We did quite well considering we did not sell any items of significant value and trading was slow throughout the day. The very nice, warm, sunny weather brought people out in numbers but most were just browsing.

We packed up as business tailed off just after lunch and we were home by about 3 p.m.

I continued preparing the laptop for the jumble sale and updated the village web site before tea.

Monday, 21st May 2018

My first task of the day was to put out the bins for the refuse collection the following day.

That was followed by a planting session, with Jenny's help, putting in the bedding plants Jenny acquired at the garden centre last Tuesday.

Most of the day was taken up tidying the garage and freeing up the trailer, which was full of car booty. We didn't actually get round to unpacking the car from Sunday and we left more work for the following day.

We left the trailer on the drive, secured to one of the car port pillars, with the large radiator from the dining room in it, ready for weighing in as scrap and a load of rubbish on the drive, destined for the tip, once the car was emptied.

As we came in at 5:30 p.m., it had started to cloud over and the weather forecast said it was raining heavily here, which it wasn't. It was trying to rain and we thought it might save us watering the plants later.

Tuesday, 22nd May 2018

It was another day in the garage, with the added excitement of crawling around the garage loft. On a beautiful sunny day, what more can one add?

Wednesday, 23rd May 2018

The day didn't start well. Jenny responded to the 7 a.m. alarm to give the cat her morning medication, comprising a small amount of trans-dermal, thyroid gel deposited on the inside of her ear (the only part of the cat's skin that is not covered in hair). Unfortunately, the cat found that ticklish and wanted to scratch her ear afterwards, if not during, the exercise and had to be prevented from doing so.

I remained in bed, absolutely shattered and kept dozing off for brief periods while Jenny was up and about and having breakfast.

The sound of pottery tinkling gave me the incentive to crawl out of bed and a wash in cold water helped a little, although I was aching all over and inside as well. I arrived at the breakfast table as Jenny was finishing her last round of toast.

After breakfast and two visits to the loo as a result of the delicious, home-made chicken tikka followed by fruit salad containing mango and topped with yoghurt the previous evening, we eventually set off on a major shopping spree for bits and pieces.

Taking the trailer full of rubbish and the radiators, we first called at the Incredible Edible plot to collect the bags of rubbish. I parked on the estate road a short distance behind the plot since access to the plot from the main road would have been difficult with the trailer.

Just across the road from the plot, we stopped at the Old School to collect the rubbish from the kitchen. I took the trailer into the yard, expecting there to be enough room to turn round. There wasn't and it was so full of vehicles, I decided not to risk performing a ten-point turn with the trailer in the small space available, unhooked it and turned the car round before reattaching it. Meanwhile, jJnny went inside to bring out the rubbish.

We made our way to Bury, calling at the scrap metal yard on the way to the tip to weigh in the radiators for cash. I made the mistake of driving into the yard instead of going onto the weighbridge first, so I did a u-turn and drove out onto the weighbridge. From there, I managed to reverse the car and trailer into the yard and dump the radiators. Then I had to drive onto the weighbridge again. Since I was facing the wrong way for the tip for the rest of the rubbish, I used a yard with rough ground opposite to perform another u-turn and pulled up on the side of the road to go in and collect my cash. For that I needed my driving licence for ID and my bank card so they could set up a direct transfer.

We drove on to the tip and dumped the rest of the rubbish in the various recycling skips.

It was a short drive from there to the vet's practice to collect the cat's medication for the next three months.

Up to this point the day was all going according to plan.

We headed for B&Q at Heap Bridge I had nine items on my list and managed to obtain one of them and that was not exactly what I wanted.

What B&Q didn't have was a pair of oval, brass hinges for a shoebox I was repairing, a small filter for the kitchen sink mixer tap, a rubber seal for the drain plug in the small sink in the kitchen or a small brass split pin for a candle snuffer I was repairing.

I did manage to find a Hoselock spray nozzle which was a different design to the original that had broken and when I tried it later at home it did not seem to function as well as the original used to do.

Since I couldn't find the important items I wanted, I didn't bother looking for the five drill bits I needed to replenish my collection.

By this time, we were feeling rather peckish and, since we were calling at Tesco on the way back, we decided to lunch at Costa Coffee there. Finding no gluten-free sandwiches or wraps at Costa we not only gave that a miss but also Tesco and our planned foray into Bury.

Next on our list was to obtain a new set of elastic toggles for the garden bench cover. Two of the old, black ones had perished and needed replacing. We called at the only shop we thought might have some, Castlecroft Caravans and Camping Centre. They didn't stock any but a very

helpful lady said she might have some in the back and went to look. She returned with five white ones which cost me £2. That was fine for now and I was very grateful but where would I obtain replacements in the future?

I missed the weigh-in for clothes on the way home and we came back for lunch.

By now I was just a little cheesed off, still feeling just a little rough, very tired and annoyed at not being able to obtain the spares I wanted. And matters were about to get worse.

Having tried out the new hose-reel spray, I looked for the old toggles for the bench cover. The cover was over the bench but I had not used the toggles to tie it down. I thought they were in the garage. It took us both over an hour of hunting in every nook and cranny of the house and garage before Jenny eventually found them on the floor, underneath an old Karcher power washer I was thinking about repairing, after I had completely given up looking.

The reason I wanted them was that I thought, if I cut off the old plastic ends and bought some black elastic from the local market, I could make my own, black toggles.

I then started thinking about how I could make my own rubber seal for the sink.

It seemed that self-sufficiency was the only way to go.

We tidied up and I put away the trailer. At least that went in the garage as planned and all our hard work over the past two days had not been wasted – unlike today.

I decided to look on the Internet for the items I wanted, starting with the oval hinges for the shoebox. I had no luck with that.

I looked for the tap filter. That turned out to be an aerator insert, a device that injected air into the water stream and I found a supplier. I decided to try the plumber's merchants on the way out for our grocery shopping the following day.

I then searched for the washer for the sink and found that. Now I knew what it was and it was available, I decided to give the plumber's merchants a try for that too.

I also found a supplier for brass split pins. It then struck me to ask Tracey Hayhoe, one of our village volunteers, if she knew where I could find one locally since she and her husband had their own metal factors business, working mainly with stainless steel. I e-mailed her.

That was as far as I got before tea was ready.

Thursday, 24th May 2018

I spent most of the day clearing the block paving of weeds and moss, working from the back and made it about half way down the large area outside the back door. The rest would have to wait until Tuesday since I would be tied up with the jumble sale all week end and Monday.

I did spend a little time after lunch looking at an empty hose reel we had for sale on our car boot stall. Jenny had cleaned it and she asked me if it looked any better. It did but I noticed there was no connector for the hose from the tap and that the part to which it should have been fitted was hidden inside the side of the reel rather than protruding as it should have been.

On dismantling the reel, I discovered that (a) the tubular frame was bent out of shape and (b) the “O” ring seal on the part to which linked the hose from the tap to the hose inside the reel had perished and broken. I thought I had some “O” rings but couldn’t find them and I didn’t have a spare tap connector. That was two more items for my shopping list the following day.

By 4 p.m., I decided enough was enough and came in for a rest and a cup of tea.

Friday, 25th May 2018

The weekly shopping trip did not go exactly as well as expected.

We called first at the Cash for Clothes collection point at Crosstones in Bury. They were closed.

I stopped off at City Plumbing at Dumers Lane for the three plumbing items I wanted, namely the tap aerator insert, the waste plug washer and the hose reel “O” ring. They had none of them. The only suggestion the chap behind the counter could suggest was to try somewhere else. My view was that if such places couldn’t be bothered to stock the little things in plumbing, they didn’t deserve the profits in the larger items.

We next visited the chemist in Prestwich, Dennis Gore. Jenny wanted some of her natural oil capsules she took twice a day. Finding somewhere to park was a nightmare and I ended up on Manchester Old Road from where Jenny walked the short distance to the shop while I waited in the car, seemingly for ages. The chemist was very busy.

Having made a fairly early start, we made it to Unicorn in Chorlton for about 11 a.m. and that was surprisingly busy, so much so that we had to queue for a short while for a space in the car park and, on leaving, we had to queue to get out while a couple of members of staff unblocked a drain and let the water flooding the car park empty into it.

We stopped off at Sainsbury’s store in Sale where we bought quite a few items we used to buy at Waitrose and which Waitrose no longer stocked. We also purchased some items Waitrose still stocked and which were cheaper. That’s what happens when one shop forces you to shop elsewhere. Not only did they lose the income from the items they had discontinued but also from other items we would normally have bought there.

As we were leaving the parked car, Jenny was putting on her coat and some ignorant moron pushed her out of his way. If you happen to be reading this and you are that moron, assuming you **can** read, please drop us your name and address so we can bring a charge of assault against you, supported by CCTV footage from the car-park surveillance camera at the store. Let’s face it, you’re bound to be thick enough to do so.

We were at Waitrose for just after noon and managed to find the last gluten-free, chicken-salad sandwich on the shelf and we had to settle for one of the remaining five egg and cress sandwiches, each of us having half of each sandwich with our cup of tea in the café.

Jenny discovered that the café had discontinued its policy of providing a free tea or coffee to “My Waitrose” customers on production of their free membership card. Instead, if one purchased a hot drink, one could choose from a selection of free, small food items. Whoever dreamed up the new idea had not really thought it through. Nothing in the selection of freebies was gluten-free. Did we have a case for discrimination here?

Meanwhile, I was taking a call from a chap in customer support for the Windows 7 laptop I had been preparing for the Old School jumble sale. Having pointed out that the web site link to download the drivers no longer worked, I was informed that the downloads had been withdrawn as the computer was obsolete. That’s what you got for buying from Curry’s/PC World and I thought Microsoft was less than on the ball.

We left Waitrose about 3 p.m., just in time to crawl most of the way home round the M60 at a speed in single figures. If only people at the controls learned to drive. Maybe if they took a **test**?

Needless to say, we called at bargain Booze in Tottington for a couple of bottles of wine on the way home.

Saturday, 26th May 2018

We made it to the Old School for about 9 a.m. and worked on the electrical jumble until about 4 p.m. There wasn’t as much as I thought and we made quite a lot of progress.

The plan was for Jenny to go car booting with Rachel over the next couple of days. The weather for Sunday looked good until we read the weather warning for heavy rain, thunderstorms and flash floods, although the exact locations for this was vague. Since it was also going to be very windy, we decided to give the car boot sale a miss on Sunday and Jenny said she would come to the Old School with me.

I spent most of the evening updating my web site and the village web site, the latter taking a good few hours and completed around 11 p.m.

Sunday, 27th May 2018

By 9 a.m. there was no sign of the heavy rain and flash flooding predicted for south Lancashire in the Met Office weather forecast, although it was a trifle windy, so they were sort of right about that. In fact, apart from a bit of thin cloud cover here and there, it was a lovely sunny day with blue skies – so far.

I was preparing to leave for the Old School and Jenny said she would probably join me later. In fact, she walked round to bring me my lunch and to exchange the back door keys for the school

keys since I had mistaken the former for the latter when I left. There was no point in Jenny staying because there was nothing in the electrical line she could do. All the remaining items were of a technical nature.

I plodded on and made significant progress, leaving and locking up about 4:15 p.m.

Back home, Rachel and Jenny had packed the car for the following morning, ignoring the weather forecast from the Met Office that predicted rain in the early part of the morning and I dealt with the TV recordings from the previous day, including working through Jazz record Requests. On the face of it, there seemed to be very little of interest to me, being more of a traditionalist and preferring the early, New Orleans music and Jazz from the revival of traditional music that swept through this country in the 1950s. Surprisingly, there were three or four tracks I liked, which was about average and just about enough to keep me interested in the programme. I really couldn't believe some of the cacophonous rubbish some people liked and as for tenor (sax) ballads, which was a running theme in the programme, they were best with the volume on zero.

Monday, 28th May 2018

Being a bank holiday and another lovely day (so much for the Met Office weather forecast – wrong again), Jenny and Rachel set off at the later than usual time of 6:16 a.m. for a car boot spot in Ramsbottom while I hung around until 7 a.m. to give the cat her dose of ear gel before heading off to finish off the electrical jumble at the Old School before the sale at 11 a.m.

The reason for the late start was that, although I had switched on the “Car Boot” alarm on my mobile phone, I had forgotten that every time I turned the alarm off, it reset the alarm time to the current time so the time on the alarm was the time at which I had switched it on the previous evening, i.e. 23:05. What I should have done is reset it to 4 a.m. Fortunately, I woke up and checked the time at 5:15 a.m. so it was a bit of a rush and the girls did well to be out of the door within the hour.

At the Old School, it was quiet and I was able to finish off everything that had been left over from the previous evening plus a couple of items that came in that morning, apart from a few items that needed more extensive repairs.

Tom, a regular helper at the Jumble Sale, helped me with the sale of electrical items and took the money while I helped out customers and to bag purchased items.

Mike, our lady mayor's husband, he and Dorothy being regulars at the Old School when they could make it, helped me tidy up after the sale, most of the unsold items being boxed up to be shipped off to Father Wyatt in Salford. Christine had asked me to keep some better items back for the Drop-in the following Saturday and I put three boxes on the stage in the hall as instructed. The items for repair, an old, collectable item and a vacuum cleaner that came in late and needed testing went in the usual storage spot in the cellar.

I came home, had a late lunch in the conservatory to keep the cat company and then tidied up some paperwork and worked on my web site redesign. When I came in the house, opening the

kitchen door was like opening the door to a furnace and I had to open the back door, the conservatory door, the door from the conservatory into the dining room and the conservatory windows to dissipate the heat.

Jenny and Rachel did not come home until nearly 5 p.m. and I was starting to worry. There was no need. It had been very busy all day and they had done extremely well. What's more, it was fortunate we did not go the previous day because all the places were taken by about 4 a.m. and we would not have been there until nearly 6 a.m. They were told it had been so busy, people in the crown could hardly move around. All the traders who managed to obtain a pitch made a handsome profit.

Tuesday, 29th May 2018

After breakfast and the usual morning chores, I took Rachel down to work in Bury, came home and put the paper recycling bin away after it had been emptied much earlier.

I spent my day clearing the block paving of weeds and moss at the back from where I left off previously and made it round the outside of the conservatory by what I thought was the end of the day.

I was back outside at 10 p.m. watering the plants. I had watered the back garden plants, raised beds and pots the previous evening but forgot about the plants along the side of the drive at the front and they were looking rather sorry for themselves, so everything received a good soaking.

Wednesday, 30th May 2018

Rachel needed a lift to Bury before 8 a.m. so I was up early and had breakfast when I returned. A quick inspection of the plants suggested they were somewhat better for a drink, as was I, usually.

The couple of weeks or so of very pleasant and unseasonal dry, warm weather was coming to an end with more average temperatures for May and rain forecast for the afternoon. I can't say the garden didn't need it so, on this occasion, it was welcome, although late evening would have been more convenient.

I spent a couple of hours sorting out a new, 24-month contract for telephone and broadband at the Old School and settled for a reasonable one with BT, resulting in a significant saving over the existing BT contract.

I decided to cut the grass on the back garden before the rains came and Jenny gave me a hand to move the picnic bench and put it back again. I helped tie up the runner beans that had grown and were now in bud.

I made a start on the block paving along the side of the house and broke off for a drink. Jenny suggested we had lunch since it had just passed noon and we had breakfasted early.

After lunch, I made the fatal mistake of joining Jenny for a brief rest in the conservatory before resuming work and fell asleep on the settee for a couple of hours. A light rain shower hitting the roof woke me and that soon turned into persistent, heavy rain.

I came into the lounge to work on the computer, still feeling a little drowsy and made quite a bit of progress with the redesign of my web site, progressing through the picture gallery pages.

Thursday, 31st May 2018

May was certainly going out on a high, with sunny spells and a reasonably warm, but very humid day. The garden certainly looked better for the rain the previous day and, I suspect, overnight. There was a lot of mist over the hills in the early morning.

My first task of the day was to follow Rachel down to the garage so they could deal with a hopefully minor problem on her car and then I gave her a lift to work at GMP HQ in Ashton. I came back via the scenic route rather than the motorway, using roads I didn't think I had been on since I was commuting to work from Sheffield in 1978. How Manchester had changed, with many more green areas and trees in full leaf.

I was home for about 10 a.m. and dealt with a bit of administration work before starting work on the block paving again.

I decided to tackle one of those little jobs I had been putting off for ages. We had a cover for the surface drain between the back door and the conservatory and it needed cutting to fit the grate and round the down-spout. That took me about half an hour and I resumed the cleaning of the block paving down the side passage.

Having left off for lunch, I had to stop work about 3 p.m. and pack up to fetch Rachel from work at 4 p.m. and take her to collect her car before the garage closed at 5 p.m. Jenny came with me on this trip.

We arrived home about 5 p.m., Rachel driving to work in Bury for a couple of hours.

My evening was not as peaceful as I expected, Jenny's laptop, which she rarely used now and which I used for most of the TV recordings, had been stopping infrequently, once with the "blue screen of death" (BSOD) and I didn't know why, although I suspected an overheating issue. During today it had crashed once and this evening twice in quick succession.

I switched a TV recording to my desktop at the last minute, switched off the laptop and vacuumed the vents. This seemed to fix the problem, although, probably only temporarily. At some stage I was going to have to strip it down and give it a thorough clean internally.

What an exciting end to the month.