

Greenmount May 2019

Wednesday, 1st May 2019

I started work on the landing skirting, plastering up the gaps that the removal of the old skirting had revealed so I had something to which to glue the new skirting. That was quite time consuming and I hadn't made a lot of progress by lunchtime.

After lunch, I helped Jenny unpack her new Philips steam generator iron and use it for the first time. Jenny found ironing with it was much easier and quicker, the only drawback being that the large amount of steam it produced soaked the ironing board to the extent that water droplets covered the floor, which became quite wet. We needed an ironing board that would collect the excess water.

In parallel with that, I dealt with my E-mails and one particular problem was that the photographs of the bathroom radiator I had sent to a couple of companies in an attempt to have an identical, stainless-steel one made had not been received and I had not had any notification to that effect. I suspected that the problem was that the images were too large for the recipient mailboxes.

I circumvented this problem by publishing the photographs of the radiator on my web site and sending the companies concerned a [link to the first picture](#).

By the time I had done all this it was getting quite late in the afternoon and I tidied up on the landing and left the skirting for another day.

Thursday, 2nd May 2019

I was up at 6 a.m., showered and round at the surgery to see my doctor, John Hampson just after 7 a.m. I arranged a small, cosmetic procedure for the following week and received confirmation that the pain in my left knee was most probably ligament damage which would take a little time to repair itself. We agreed the best course of action was to keep it moving.

I walked down to the Cricket Club to vote in the local elections. All three of our local Conservative councillors had been very supportive of our village community actions and had promised to protect Bury's green-belt from urban sprawl (the Greater Manchester Framework) if they gained control of the council so my choice of candidates was rather an obvious one.

I had formed the opinion that local politics and central government politics were entirely separate. What mattered locally was support for the community. At a national level the priorities should be what is in the best interests of everyone in the country and should take into account global consequences. On that score, none of the three major parties deserved my vote at a general election.

Friday, 3rd May 2019

The grocery shopping day was slightly better than usual, with less congestion on the M60 than usual as we travelled from Home Bargains in Bury to Unicorn in Chorlton. The onward journey to Waitrose at Broadheath along the A56 was also reasonable. The only gluten-free offering at Waitrose for lunch was an egg and watercress sandwich, which, I suppose was better than nothing. Jenny had eaten her lunch, purchased at Unicorn, on the way.

We finished shopping early and one would expect a fairly trouble-free journey home at 2 p.m. in the afternoon. Not a bit of it.

First we had to contend with dithering drivers on the A56 who didn't have a clue in which lane they wanted to be. Then we hit speed restrictions soon after joining the M60 due to queuing traffic at the M62 junction. The majority of drivers just had no concept of leaving a gap so vehicles could join the motorway and change lanes or the skills to merge between oncoming traffic at speed. Until drivers learnt good road-craft, they should not be allowed on motorways.

We took the route home through Tottington to call for some wine at Bargain Booze.

Saturday, 4th May 2019

We spent the morning at the Old School monthly drop-in. We arrived late, just as the drop-in opened to the public and all the room was taken with items for sale, apart from a room where the ladies were sorting the clothing jumble and the room set out with tables, used as a café. That meant there was nowhere I could work on any electrical jumble.

I spent much of my time tidying up the items stored in the cellar. I did make one sale of a blue-ray DVD player, left over from the last jumble sale, for £25, to a regular gentleman who asked me for the specific item.

I came home and installed an old Hapuppauge USB DVB-T stick I had found in the jumble on the old Dell XPS Windows 7 system and, after a bit of fiddling, it worked perfectly even though it was now classed as a legacy item and was originally sold for use with Windows XP.

I also booked a hotel in Edinburgh for later in the month for a four-day break.

Jenny and Rachel went out to pack the car for the following day's car boot sale while I listened to Jazz Record Requests. I also performed a minor repair of one of the cat carriers we had and which Jenny wanted to sell.

Sunday, 5th May 2019

The alarm went off at 5 a.m. I was already awake and leapt out of bed – well, perhaps not exactly leapt.

I was first downstairs and prepared breakfast, after which I checked the weather forecast again. Rain was forecast for Ramsbottom around lunchtime, the time at which Jenny and Rachel were normally busiest. Jenny decided not to go car booting and to leave the car packed for the following day, for which rain was also forecast, on the basis that the weather might improve.

After washing the pots, I checked the forecast again. The rain in Ramsbottom had miraculously disappeared, although it still had a 20% chance of reappearing. Jenny decided to stay put.

I turned my attention to PC work, as I would have done had the girls gone car-booting.

Matthew arrived about 10:30 to help me finish off replacing the fence panels. The last two both proved difficult and I had to be cut about ½ an inch off one side of each.

Meanwhile, Roger the clock man arrived to have a look at the wall clock we had purchased at the antiques and collectors fair. He took it away with him and said he would give me a price for fixing it but it might cost more than the clock was worth, which didn't really matter so long as it was reasonable because we didn't intend to sell it. It was destined for the dining room.

I recommenced plastering the wall from which I had removed the skirting on the landing and I would have finished it had I not run out of filler.

Needless to say, it didn't rain and the car boot was reported to have been very busy.

Monday, 6th May 2019

Due to the weather forecast being for rain again, Jenny decided not to go car-booting again and I helped unload the car and store the car booty away.

Afterwards I tidied up the garden a bit until it rained.

After that it was back to sorting out my audio media documentation.

Tuesday, 7th May 2019

We went down to B&Q for some filler. I was also going to buy a long, horizontal clamp (the kind used for edge-jointing wide pieces of wood) so I could repair a couple of items. I didn't like the clamps B&Q had.

We called at Tesco for some gluten-free items and thought we'd give Costa another try for lunch. That was a complete waste of time. Costa had no gluten-free food and Tesco's gluten-free section was not brilliant. We decided to leave it until we could call at Morrisons or Sainsbury's.

We drove into Ramsbottom for lunch at Drinc where I knew they did serve gluten-free food from an earlier visit with the chaps while we were out walking. Jenny settled for a tea and a piece

of cake. I had tea and a chicken piri-piri sandwich, which was very nice but on reflection came with too much bread (three slices). The prices were reasonable.

We called at the card shop and toured the charity shops, where Jenny found a couple of books. We also saw someone we knew in Memories so we nipped in for a chat. Memories was a large antiques and collectables shop, which had two floors of stalls rented by different people (21 I was told) so there was quite a variety of items. We didn't find anything we wanted though.

Back home, I did a little more documentation on my PC before tea.

Wednesday, 8th May 2019

I was out of bed at 6:30 a.m. thinking it was 7:30 a.m. and promptly back in again for about another hour when I double-checked the clock.

I had to be up early for my 8:30 a.m. appointment with one of the nurses at the medical centre. She sprayed me with liquid nitrogen. To be more precise, she targeted a rather annoying wart that had recently appeared just to the right of my right eye. Not having experienced the effect of liquid nitrogen before, I was not sure what to expect and I was a little concerned for the welfare of my eye. I need not have been. The offending growth was accurately targeted and while unpleasant and very cold, the whole process was over quickly and the effects soon wore off. The nurse did say that it would take a few similar treatments to kill it off, root and all and I was booked in for two weeks hence for another shot at it. She also told me it might get worse before it got better and it would eventually drop off of its own accord. I was pleased that the wart was all she targeted.

I did intend to continue my plastering but Jenny needed my help to clean our bedroom and we gave it a thorough going over, which took all day.

Thursday, 9th May 2019

We were grocery shopping a day early again due to Friday being D-CaFF day. The journey out was pleasant enough, with the usual speed restrictions on the M60 from the East Lancs turn-off to the Trafford Centre on the far side of the canal bridge.

We called at Sainsbury's supermarket in Sale on the way to Waitrose and there was quite a queue of traffic at the major junction before our turn-off to Broadheath, the one where there were major road works not so long ago to improve traffic flow.

There was not a lot of gluten-free choice for lunch at Waitrose, so if you're celiac and shop at Waitrose, have a meal first and/or take your own snack.

The journey home was as slow and plagued with bad driving as usual.

Friday, 10th May 2019

It was the third birthday of our dementia café and we were there just about in time for the start of the usual anniversary “All Aboard the Blackpool Belle” audio/video presentation, which was, once again, excellent. That was followed by lunch and more entertainment from our presenter.

After D-CaFF, we popped up to see Bob and Marie, essentially to drop off Bob’s birthday card and we stayed for a cup of tea and chatted for a while.

Saturday, 11th May 2019

A long day dealing with the electrical jumble at the old school was followed by listening to a recording of Jazz Record Requests (BBC Radio 3). The programme was, once again, dominated by more modern jazz, this programme having a theme of “Blue Note” Jazz, most of which was not to my taste. I did find one track of interest out of the hour-long programme.

Sunday, 12th May 2019

It was a 4:30 a.m. start, Jenny and Rachel leaving at about 6 a.m. for their car boot spot in Ramsbottom Station car park. I carried on with some PC work before leaving for another day’s work on the electrical jumble at the old school.

I was home about ten minutes to four, fifteen minutes before the girls and listened to a couple of Jazz CDs. The car boot had been another success and it had been a nice day after the freezing start.

Monday, 13th May 2019

After two long working days, we had a lie-in and it was lunchtime before we were in top gear.

Jenny went outside to unload the car and sort her car booty. I helped lift boxes around and store them in the garage.

In my free periods, I cut the grass front and back and trimmed the edges. After tidying up, I watered the raised beds, the pots, the blueberry bush, the rhubarb and the rose bush. I left the rest of the plants to fend for themselves for the present.

Tuesday, 14th May 2019

I finished off plastering the gaps left by the skirting on the landing and started measuring for the lengths of new skirting required. My plan was to start cutting and fitting after lunch, for which I needed Jenny’s help.

Jenny had other plans, not least preparing a pizza for tea, so I agreed we should leave the skirting until the following day. One has to get one's priorities right.

After lunch, we sauntered up to the dentist at Holcombe Brook to drop off a letter on behalf of Rachel.

On returning, Jenny commenced the preparation work for tea. I worked on the computer, updating my web site and then downloading some pictures of the village party for which I had agreed to create the web pages for Marcus, our new village webmaster, to upload. I still needed the pictures Alistair took in lieu of my absence and I telephoned him. He was away on holiday and said he would deal with the pictures when he returned later in the week.

I also sent an enquiry to Bolton Bathrooms asking about a bathroom refurbish. The company completely refitted our bathroom fourteen years ago and in view of my difficulty in obtaining a stainless steel radiator to replace the existing conventional one supplied by that company and which had sprung a leak, I thought it might be a good idea to invite them back to spruce up the bathroom and supply a new radiator.

Wednesday, 15th May 2019

I spent much of the day cutting the wood for the new skirting on the landing. The fact that the walls were not flat and the corners were not at right-angles made the job difficult and progress was slow. What little I did achieve looked good and I was pleased with the result thus far. I had approached a tricky bit, an external corner, towards the end of the day and decided to leave it until I was fresh, in the morning.

Thursday, 16th May 2019

I awoke to the shrieks of Rachel, who, working in Bury, had stayed overnight and discovered blood on the bathroom floor. A brief examination revealed that the blister under my left big toe, which I had acquired walking without socks in my sandals on Tuesday, had bled in the night as I had visited the bathroom. I had not noticed at the time. It was not painful and there was no sign of blood elsewhere, which was strange. Jenny was not best pleased since she had only cleaned the bathroom a couple of days earlier.

I washed and disinfected my foot before breakfast.

I resumed work on the landing skirting and spent quite a while making the external corner. By the end of the day, it was beginning to look really nice, although some fine adjustment was still necessary due to the unevenness of the plastering and the poor quality of joinery on the part of the builders.

Friday, 17th May 2019

This was the usual grocery shopping day at Unicorn, Sainsbury's store at Sale and Waitrose at Broadheath, near Altrincham. It was again the story of heavy but manageable traffic on the way out and heavy, slow-moving traffic on the way back. We eventually managed to find some food that did not contain gluten, according to the list of ingredients, at Waitrose, for lunch, but Waitrose was definitely not celiac-friendly.

Windows Media Centre on the old Dell XPS laptop was being awkward; it would not update the programme guide and it was 1 a.m. the following morning by the time I had sorted it out and put in the TV recordings for the week end.

Saturday, 18th May 2019

I was up at 7 a.m. and at the old school, working on the electrical jumble again, making it back home just in time for Jazz Record Requests at 4 p.m. After that, I finished putting in the TV recordings for the week.

Sunday, 19th May 2018

We were up at 6 a.m. Jenny and Rachel went car booting in Ramsbottom. The weather forecast had been changing back and forth over the last couple of days with some rain being around and they had to abandon the sale at about 1 p.m. due to a light shower. Nevertheless they did reasonably well and managed to pack everything away before it got wet.

Meanwhile, I was back at the old school for 8 a.m. and came home about 4 p.m. having dealt with almost all of the jumble, apart from some items needing repair.

We both fell asleep in our comfy chairs after a lovely tea of seafood risotto with a glass or two of Chardonnay followed by strawberries and cream, finished off with Green and Black's chocolate assortment and a glass of Armagnac.

Monday, 20th May 2018

I awoke at about 6:20 a.m. and went back to sleep. I awoke again just over an hour later and went back to sleep. We eventually staggered downstairs at just after 9 a.m. in our dressing gowns for breakfast.

It was a day of bits, helping Jenny with her car booty now and again while dealing with some PC administrative work, unsuccessfully trying to repair a CD drive on a compact hi-fi unit from the old school jumble and leaving off, just before lunch, to deal with a gentleman from Bolton Bathrooms I had invited along to give me a price for refurbishing the bathroom because I didn't really have the time.

Tuesday, 21st May 2019

We had a bit of a lazy day. We went into Ramsbottom for a tour of the charity shops and a wander about in the sun. I spent time on the computer continuing the restoration of my audio media catalogue.

Wednesday, 22nd May 2019

I was back at the local surgery for a second liquid nitrogen blast at my offending protuberance. This time, I knew what to expect and I wasn't disappointed. A further session was booked for two weeks later in case I needed it.

We went into Bury, primarily to stock up on bottled water from Home Bargains, where we bought a few other bits and pieces we needed.

We first called at the recycling depot to drop off some of our rubbish and some from the old school and we went on to the electrical shop where I normally buy my spares to repair lamps, The Lighthouse on Rochdale Old Road. I needed an antique brass bayonet fitting for a lamp at the old school but I didn't expect it to cost me £7.50. I thought that was extortionate and decided the lamp was not worth repairing at that cost.

Jenny went to Tesco while I wandered across into the town centre to take a picture of the new bronze statue of Victoria Wood, a very funny and talented comedienne from Bury who died far too young.

After lunch at home, I worked on the pictures from the village party. These included some video clips and I eventually decided to string them together into one long clip. I used a copy of Cyberlink Powerdirector for that, which took me a while to figure out how to do what I wanted and I almost succeeded. I needed to start again and left it for another day.

A major stumbling block was a video shot in two parts which I had to piece together using VideoRedo TV Suite. I could have done it in Powerdirector but the problem was that this video was horizontal and needed rotating 90°. Not being the latest and fully licensed version, it did not do this properly and I wasn't about to fork out £80 to upgrade it for this simple, one-off task. None of the so-called free utilities I found on the Internet worked well enough either, including Microsoft Movie Maker – unless I upgraded from the free version to the full version at a cost of around £20. I hit on the idea of asking the support team at VideoRedo if the TV Suite I had recently purchased as an upgrade from the very excellent VideoRedo for around £40, primarily to edit Windows Media Centre recordings, would do it and I discovered the following day in an E-mail reply that it should.

Thursday, 23rd May 2019

I had planned to wash the car the previous day but rain was forecast, so I left it until today. Needless to say, it didn't rain yesterday.

I washed the car before lunch and then went out after lunch to polish it. I had done all the outside except for the sills and the wheels by 5 p.m. so I decided to leave those until the following day. The windows also needed cleaning inside and out and the interior needed cleaning as well so it was fortunate that Matthew had let me know he did not need me the following day to help with some electrical work as we had arranged.

During my lunch break, I had another go at the lopsided video using VideoRedo TV suite. That sorted out the video frames but introduced interference into the audio stream. Since this was a single scene of two people playing alpine horns, I decided I would have a try at extracting the audio from the original, lopsided clip and replace the audio on the corrected clip. That meant removing the audio from the latter and then re-multiplexing the video with the audio from the original. Separating audio from video was fairly straightforward. Adding an audio track to a video was another matter and a job for when I was somewhat fresher.

Friday, 24th May 2019

I resumed my cleaning of the car and finished off the outside, except for the wheels, which I forgot to do. I cleaned the windows inside and out and then started work on the car interior. That went well enough until the hose on the Dyson Animal Ball vacuum cleaner ripped apart where it went into the end to which tools were attached. I decided to try to mend it and took the fitting apart with some difficulty. It obviously wasn't meant to be repaired. Dyson was definitely not environmentally friendly.

Jenny went round to the old school to see where our electrical section had been allocated space and it was in a cramped corner of the hall. She started putting out the items we had tested and priced. Meanwhile, I went to see how Matthew's developments were progressing and gave him some help with his new construction, designed to provide shelter on the patio area. I had planned to go on the see Kelly, a lady who regularly came to our jumble sales, who lived at Whitefield and who had a problem with a printer. There was no reply when I called her so I carried on helping Matthew and then came home.

Saturday, 25th May 2019

I went round to the old school early and Jenny came later. I adjusted the items for sale, which Jenny had put out and then commenced bringing up more items that had been priced and tested from our store, in the cellar and put those out as well. Then I brought up more items for testing and sorted out the ones Jenny could do when she came. I carried on with the more technical items and those that needed repair. We were there until early evening.

Sunday, 26th May 2019

I was busy at the old school all day again. Jenny didn't come because she wanted to prepare for our short break in Edinburgh and there was nothing left for her to do at the old school anyway. Kelly came with her printer problem and it turned out to be a fault with the printer which I

suggested might be due to her using ink cartridges that were not from the manufacturer of the printer, so I couldn't really fix it.

Monday, 27th May 2019

We were at the old school early again, on this occasion for the jumble sale and we did quite well.

After lunch, we prepared for our trip the following day.

Tuesday, 28th May 2019

I drove up to Edinburgh, taking the RAC recommended route via the M6 and the cross-country scenic A702, which was shorter than using the M62 and A1. Unfortunately, I missed the turning onto the Edinburgh bypass that would have taken us around the city centre and brought us out at the top of the A1, on the road leading down to Leith docks. We were staying at the Premier Inn on Leith Waterfront because it was cheaper than the city centre and there was ample free car parking.

The navigation error forced us onto the main road through the city centre, which was very busy. We ended up on Princess Street, the main shopping centre and then on Leith Walk. Fortunately, I knew this part of the city from a much earlier visit and, luckily, we spotted a sign from there to the waterfront. The problem was locating our hotel. Leith had changed and there had been a lot of development. Fortunately, we obtained directions from a coach driver, sitting in his parked vehicle on some rough ground.

Since it was around tea-time by the time we had settled in, we decided to stroll along the waterfront of the Firth of Forth and have tea at the Brewer's Fayre adjoining the Premier Inn.

Wednesday, 29th May 2019

I had some instructions, again from the RAC web site, for walking up to the city centre from Leith, which was about 3 miles from the hotel and which was supposed to take about an hour. We set off after eating breakfast in our room, having brought a cool box of basic items with us.

The first problem was that the instructions told us to turn right on the waterfront road after leaving the hotel and we later discovered it should have been left. It dawned on me, also later, that the reason was that the starting point was based on the post code for the area rather than the hotel address and the centre of the postal area was further down the road.

Having eventually managed to find the road we needed, we followed the instructions, which were not very clear when we found ourselves in a park. We took what we thought was the correct path from the park, through a wood by a stream and came out on a main road. The instructions told us to go straight ahead along Scotland Street. The only problem was that the

road straight ahead was McDonald Road. We tore up the instructions and followed McDonald Road onto Leith Walk. From there, we knew where we were and made our way to Tourist Information on Princess Street, near Waverley Station (according to a map obtained from our hotel) only to find it had moved onto the Royal Mile. We crossed the railway and walked up to the Royal Mile. At the Tourist Information Centre we booked a tour of the Royal Yacht Britannia for the following day and admission to the castle and a ghost walk on Friday.

We grabbed a late lunch at Prêt à Manger, pottered round the Royal Mile and then made our way to Dishoom, an Indian Restaurant, for our evening meal. Dishoom was not the conventional restaurant. Instead, for the main meal, each person ordered two or three dishes and then everyone shared the dishes. It was different and very nice and we were fortunate in that we managed to obtain a table on arrival. Dishoom did not normally take bookings, which accounted for long queues outside at busy times ([see our trip to London in January](#)).

After our meal we retraced our steps back to the hotel.

Thursday, 30th May 2019

We had breakfast in our room for the second time.

The rain that had persisted down the previous evening as we walked back to the hotel continued throughout the day. Fortunately, for most of it, we were walking round the Royal Yacht Britannia. That was much more interesting than I had expected and, surprisingly, I found it well worth the visit. We even had tea and cakes on board for lunch.

After finishing our tour, we spent some time wandering round the Ocean Terminal, which struck me as a cross between an airport terminal and a shopping mall.

Given the bad weather, we returned to the hotel mid-afternoon and had a rest for a couple of hours before having tea in the adjoining Brewer's Fayre.

Friday, 31st May 2019

After breakfast in the Brewer's Fayre, we caught the No 10 bus, which stopped outside the hotel, up to Princess Street, the flat-rate fare being £1.70 per adult (no concessions and the Manchester travel pass was not accepted), which seemed quite reasonable for the 30 minute journey.

Before making our way up to the castle, we tried to find the bust stop for our return journey later that day, without success, so I picked up a bus timetable, showing the route, from the travel shop on Waverley Bridge.

There seemed much more to see at the castle than the last time we were there (see [the picture gallery](#)). It was really busy with lots of foreign visitors and that made taking pictures difficult, more so than on the previous day. Again, it was well worth the visit.

We had a very nice lunch in the tea rooms there and spent most of the day in the castle.

We left in the late afternoon for an early tea at Pizza Express on George IV Bridge, which was convenient because it was close to the meeting point for the ghost walk at 8 p.m. at the corner of the street and the Golden Mile.

The 1½ hour [ghost walk](#) (Vaults and Graveyard Tour) actually lasted 2 hours and was most entertaining. It took us into Greyfriars Church Yard and the old underground city and was definitely not for the faint-hearted or claustrophobic or for those who are easily offended; when exploring the history of Edinburgh, political correctness did not apply. Unfortunately, I personally did not see any ghosts or witness anything unusual but if you go on the tour and you do, it would be nice to hear from you. Apparently, several reliable witnesses of all ages have.

We caught the No 10 bus back to Newhaven in Leith, where we were staying.

Read more in [next month's gripping episode](#).