

Greenmount May 2020

Friday, 1st May 2020

It was a reasonable day and we went on the walk we had planned yesterday, up to Holcombe Brook and back via a circular route.

As we returned, we met a lady we knew quite well outside her home and our conversation drifted towards computers and that she was having problems with her laptop, so I said I would take a look at it and brought it home with me.

The rest of my day was taken up with putting in the TV recordings for the coming week and fixing Windows 10 on the aforementioned laptop. The latter ultimately required Windows 10 to be reinstalled, after I had located and backed up the lady's missing documents to one of my external hard drives. Essentially, the Microsoft Windows 10 account on the laptop was corrupt and I could not figure out how or why it had happened.

Saturday, 2nd May 2020

I finished off the laptop and, after lunch, we strolled round to return the computer.

I spent what was left of the afternoon dealing with the TV recordings from the last day or so, the programmes we had watched and backing up my data.

I was still having reception problems with the connection in the lounge.

Sunday, 3rd May 2020

It wasn't a bad day, so, after a leisurely start, we set off about 12:30 for a walk. We took the old train line, now cycle route 6 and shared path, down towards Bury. It was very busy.

When we reached Woodhill Road, just before Bury, we turned left to Burrs Country Park, Activity Centre (the site of an old mill) and caravan and motor-home park, recently with its own station on the East Lancashire Railway, our local heritage line.

We sat at one of the picnic tables for a short break and a snack, then we headed back along the Irewll Trail, following the River Irewll back to Summerseat, climbed the hill and walked home along the road.

We had covered about six miles, taking it easy and enjoying the day.

Needless to say, I didn't do much else before tea except listen to Jazz Record Requests while planning our next walk. I had never visited a local landmark, Grants Tower, so I looked for a

circular walk up to it, across the Irwell valley, using the new Explorer OS maps I had recently purchased. I discovered I needed all three of them for this outing.

Monday, 4th May 2020

It was a day in the garden, grass cutting, trimming the edges, tidying up the borders and tying up a few branches of the blackberry bush. Three of Jenny's few potatoes she planted because they were small ones that had started to sprout were pushing through and the strawberries were doing particularly well so far. I just hoped my nematodes arrived before they started to ripen.

Tuesday, 5th May 2020

I had planned to finish polishing the car doors inside. Unfortunately another leisurely start to the day, a couple of long telephone calls and a walk up to Holcombe Brook and back put that on the back burner.

We strolled up through the village and along Bolton Road West to Holcombe Brook and then came back down Longsight Road for some exercise and to call at the post office for a couple of face masks, one for me and one for Rachel. The face masks had been made by local residents and were being sold using a donation scheme with the proceeds going to the NHS. All of the masks had been sold. We could have left our name and number to be informed when more would be available but we didn't bother.

We turned right, up Vernon Road, to come back to Greenmount and called at Julie Smale's house as we did so. Julie had called that morning with a PC problem, which I sorted out for her and Jenny had mentioned the face masks. Julie said she had a couple she had made and we could have. Jenny also dropped off a couple of safety-pins she wanted.

Jenny called at the local pharmacy for her eye drops. We had insisted that she be given the branded ones issued by the hospital pharmacy. Ignoring that instruction, the lady at the pharmacy tried to palm her off with the same generic drug as before which caused eye irritation. Jenny explained she wanted the proper drug and obtained it with some reluctance. It wasn't exactly in the same packaging as the hospital had issued but at least it was the branded drug.

Wednesday, 6th May 2020

Our day started at 3:30 in the morning when the alarm sounded at the bungalow at the top of the road. After investigating, that turned out to be a false alarm.

We didn't manage to get much sleep after that and we were up before 6 a.m., making it to Sainsbury's at Heaton Park by 7:15 and Jenny was second in the queue of "oldies" for access at 8 a.m. While Jenny was grocery shopping, I finished cleaning the car.

After that, we headed off to Unicorn in Chorlton, arriving at 9:30, as the “oldies” half hour started there.

We had a short queue at Waitrose at Broadheath, where we both went in together and we left there at just after noon. We were home for 12:45 p.m., something of a record.

We quickly unpacked the car and then set off again to drop off some items for Rachel at her flat in Manchester.

After returning home, we had a late lunch and tidied up. I started looking through the Radio Times at next week’s programme listings while Jenny prepared tea. We watched the usual late afternoon quiz programmes on TV. I fell asleep on the settee for about half an hour, by which time tea was almost ready.

Jenny fell asleep in her chair later while watching a recorded TV programme.

It had been a long day.

Thursday, 7th May 2020

Needless to say, after yesterday’s antics, we didn’t rise that early. I had planned on cleaning out the conservatory gutters and garage gutters, clearing the debris off the garage roof and trimming back the ivy.

By 3:30, I was still struggling with the box gutter section of the conservatory gutter, which was impossible to reach without the right tools; I tried some makeshift ideas with a little success. In the past, I have layed in a very uncomfortable position on the garage roof and struggled to clean the box gutter by hand, which, by and large, has been successful. I really didn’t want to do that again if I could help it.

The threat of rain stopped play and we had packed up by 3:45, putting away all my tools and fetching in the washing and the lines. I was not best pleased as the threatened shower did not mature and I had not even completed the first part of my intended work.

Worse still, the good weather was set to end after today and there was a threat of rain for the next week or so, which the garden needed. It would have been nice if it had rained during the nights though.

Friday, 8th May 2020

How wrong could the weather forecast have been? After an early cloudy start it was a lovely, dry, sunny day.

After dealing with my backlog of E-mails, I started by putting the washing lines out for Jenny and then spraying the weeds in the block paving with weed killer again. By the time I had done that and mixed more weed killer for next time, it was lunchtime.

We had lunch on the patio, on the picnic bench.

I had intended tackling the guttering again but this being VE Day, everyone had been encouraged to join in a kind of street party, chatting with neighbours at a safe distance over a glass or two of wine. We joined in, minus the wine and came in about 5 p.m.

It had been a very pleasant afternoon.

Saturday, 9th May 2020

I put the conservatory gutter on the back burner and trimmed back the ivy along the garage wall. That had grown considerably and it took some time, particularly since I had to squeeze between the bushes and the garage wall to deal with it.

My next challenge was to clean the garage guttering along the same wall. Manoeuvring the stepladder over, through and around the bushes was something of a challenge and the fact that the common land at the side of the garage sloped irregularly upward away from the garage added to the day's enjoyment.

I broke off the gutter cleaning for lunch on the picnic bench on the patio in the warm sunshine again and we sat listening to the birds in the many trees and bushes roundabout for a short while.

Before resuming work, I helped Jenny sow some lettuce and carrot seeds in one of our raised beds. We were running out of growing space and I made a mental note to look for a fourth raised bed kit since we had room on one of the raised bed benches for one.

As my work slowly progressed, I enlisted Jenny's help, mainly as a "gofer" so that I didn't have to keep climbing up and down the steps over and through the bushes.

I finished the gutter and also cleared much of the tree debris that had been stuck to the rear part of the garage roof tiles.

After a brief rest, I finished my day by clearing out the downspout in the corner between the conservatory and the house wall. That just left the box gutter to finish cleaning, the rear two polycarbonate roof panels to clean now I had removed the tree debris and the trim to refit to the bottom of the two panels. The trim kept coming off and ending up in the gutter and if I managed to refit it, I decided I might try sticking it in place with superglue. This feverish activity would probably require me to work on the garage roof, laid on my stomach, upside down, as I had done in the past. This was not something to which I was looking forward.

A quick shower followed, after which I was ready to fall asleep. Only the thought of my venison tea with a glass or two of red wine kept me awake – just long enough to enjoy my evening meal.

Sunday, 10th May 2020

The weather had changed for the worse. I spent the day tidying up the recorded TV programmes we had watched and backing up my files.

Apart from the routine chores, I prepared the mint sauce for the roast lamb dinner, after listening to Jazz Record Requests.

Monday, 11th May 2020

Well the first job of the day, after breakfast, was to make the fire. Jenny was huddled in a blanket in her chair in the lounge and her hands were numb from the cold. She thawed out after about a couple of hours, leaving the warm lounge for the cold of the upstairs to potter about tidying up.

I spent the rest of my morning dealing with the TV recordings from the previous evening and overnight and tending the fire, having done the previous evening's dishes before breakfast, being the first up.

My afternoon wasn't that productive either, working on the computer in between tending the fire.

Tuesday, 12th May 2020

We were still in the grip of the wintery conditions, although it was a little warmer, at least by the time we had sorted ourselves out, which was early afternoon.

The first task of the day was to check the weather. Over the next week or so, the forecast was for mostly fine weather but very little sunshine and temperatures increasing by one degree a day to reach a high of 15°C, still cold for the time of year.

There were a few E-mails needing attention and a few other administrative jobs before doing some tidying in the garage, not that it showed much.

I did start to clean the fire before tea.

Wednesday, 13th May 2020

I started off mixing and applying my nematodes to destroy slugs in the raised beds and the borders, particularly round the hosta plant, which they had destroyed almost every year in the

past. Nematodes were an organic method of destroying pests and there were different ones for different pests.

After that, I did some more tidying in the garage and gave Jenny a hand to put some more compost around the potatoes that were starting to grow.

I finished cleaning the fire and then started tidying my desk in the conservatory. That was slow going because a lot of the items were in need of repair.

Thursday, 14th May 2020

We had a call from Rita during breakfast. Rita is one of the older ladies who helped out at the old school. She had bought an electric kettle at the last jumble sale and she telephoned me to ask if I would take a look at it because it had stopped working.

We strolled down the road after breakfast to collect the kettle and brought it back home. It worked perfectly when I half-filled it with water, plugged it in and switched it on. I rang Rita to say it was alright and the problem she experienced was possibly due to the kettle not having enough water in it, it not being seated on the base properly or a faulty electrical socket into which it had been plugged. I arranged to take it back after lunch.

Meanwhile, it was a day for tidying and cleaning my desk in the conservatory. I also had a look at Jenny's old electronic scales which had stopped working and for which she had received a warranty replacement. I was loathe to throw the old ones away if they could be repaired and kept as a spare. The problem seemed to be a faulty on/off button and I ascertained the row of four buttons, of which this was one, were all on one printed circuit board. The fact that the PCB had text on it to identify it did not help me to locate a spare part. I put the scales back together and made a note of the part I needed.

After lunch, we went back down to Rita's house to drop off the kettle and I reiterated to possible causes of the apparent fault. Rita said she would try the kettle again and, if necessary in a different socket. I said I would look at the suspect socket for her, if necessary, when I was allowed to do so under the "lockdown" restrictions.

We called at the village convenience store for the Radio Times on the way home.

The end of the afternoon was taken up with attempts to resurrect my old Buffalo Ethernet to wireless four-port converter in the conservatory because the present method of connecting the desktop to my network by cable, using the internal power wiring, was not fast enough.

The first challenge was to configure the Buffalo device. That had to be done initially using a network cable between the PC and the device. I tried installing the software from the issue CD on both my Windows 7 desktop and my Windows 10 laptop. That didn't work. I looked on the Buffalo web site for a download of the software without success. After a lot of messing about, I logged a fault ticket with Buffalo.

I then had a thought and looked at the issue CD to see if I could install the software manually but that didn't work either. Then I noticed there was a manual on the CD so I had a look at it. There were three methods to configure the device, the last one being access using a web browser. That worked in so far as I was able to configure the device with my network settings. Unfortunately it would not communicate with my broadband router (i.e. my network).

I suspected I had this problem before and it was to do with the network security not being properly supported by both this device and my BT broadband router. I concluded their individual peculiarities made them incompatible.

I updated the fault report I had made to Buffalo accordingly and decided to sleep on the problem.

Thank goodness it was tea time.

Friday, 15th May 2020

I started by bringing the accounts up to date, not that there was much to do and I paid Matthew for the few groceries Carrie dropped off for us.

I intended to put in the TV programmes to record for the coming week and decided to use the desktop Windows 7 computer in the conservatory since Windows Media Centre was much better at searching for programmes and queuing recordings.

First I had to install Microsoft Office so I could use Excel. I kept a list of TV series and items I wanted to record in a spreadsheet and I needed that so I could undertake the searches. I used a disc image of Microsoft Office on one of my external hard drives to perform the installation – or I would have done if I could have mounted the image on a virtual drive in Windows 7. I had to install Clone Drive to do that.

As I did so, I came across an article on the internet about Microsoft making an image of the Windows 7 installation disc available for download and that was a must-have. So I was sidetracked into downloading both the 32-bit and 64-bit versions, my licence allowing me to download an installation up to Service Pack 1. That was fine as far as it went.

To be sure Windows 7 was up to date, at least up to the cessation of Microsoft support, I needed a consolidated download of the updates from SP1 onwards. I succeeded in downloading a consolidated update as far as May 2016.

Meanwhile I was searching for the programmes I wanted to record – or I would have done had EPG123 updated my Media Centre guide listings. I performed a manual update (and later a second one after modifying the parameters to include series and episode numbers in the titles of programmes that needed them), which took ages.

By the end of the day I had entered all the recordings in me3dia Centre.

It was my usual practice to enter the recordings on the lounge laptop as well, unless there was a programme clash, in which case one programme was recorded on the desktop and the other on the laptop. This duplication allowed for mistakes and hardware failure, which occurred more frequently than one would expect. Read on.

Saturday, 16th May 2020

It became evident early on that I had forgotten to duplicate my TV recordings on the laptop. Fortunately, the early morning recording on the desktop was fine and I resolved that little problem.

I started tidying up the programmes we had watched during the previous week and made a bit of a hash of it. Sorting it out took twice as long as it should have done.

Jenny was in the kitchen and I was conscious that she needed to progress the routine chores, with my assistance.

We then embarked on the mammoth task of sorting out the car booty that was stored on the top of our bedroom wardrobes. We had already started this and not progressed that far. I managed to place three of the items in their boxes back out of harm's way, having a sales sheet with photograph of each on disc, on my web site and on a hard copy for Jenny's folder.

By tea time we had assembled our fourth item, Castle Greyskull and all accessories on the lounge coffee table ready for me to photograph.

Sunday, 17th May 2020

I started my day by sorting out the TV programmes we had watched during the previous week.

I left off to go for a walk with Jenny. It was a pleasant day, albeit with a fair amount of cloud cover, although it wasn't too cold. It was nice walking weather and the very dry spell meant that the ground was dry, somewhat unusual for these parts.

We walked up to Old Kays and climbed to the top of the hill where we sat on the bench and admired the view, across Two Brooks Valley, of the hills of the West Pennine Moors beyond. How fortunate we were to have all this just a few minutes' walk from home.

We walked the short distance up to Turton Road, turned right for a few steps and took the track down to Two Borooks Valley, following the path along the Valley to Hawkshaw.

We had a short walk back along Bolton Road, through Hawkshaw to take a footpath on the right to Sunny Top. (I had intended to take the one down to Croichley Fold, which was further on). That took us back down onto the path in the valley bottom on which we had come, for a short distance, before we turned left to climb the hill up to...yes, Croichley Fold.

From there we cut straight across the field, over the style and along the footpath that led towards the golf club, coming back across the golf course.

We had been walking for about two hours so I guess we covered about four to five miles.

I carried on with my earlier task and then listened to Jazz Record Requests on BBC Radio 3 as usual on a Sunday afternoon.

My sister, Barbara, telephoned for a chat, after which we had tea and settled down for an early evening's viewing of recorded TV.

Monday, 18th May 2020

Most of my day was applied to my web site and bringing the Car Booty advertised for sale up to date.

Rachel came for a most welcome visit and we chatted at a distance, she seated on a chair on the drive under the car port (out of the rain) and us inside the entrance hall.

Tuesday, 19th May 2020

I continued the work on bringing our items for sale on my web site up to date. There was still much to do.

Wednesday, 20th May, 2020

We went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's at Heaton Park, Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath, near Altrincham.

We were home at about lunchtime and I had intended cutting the grass after lunch. First, I had to go to the village pharmacy to pick up my next month's supply of tablets and on the way, I stopped to talk to one of our neighbours. I must have been chatting for the best part of an hour and by the time I came back, it was too late to think about any major task so I dealt with my E-mails and updated my web site with all the recent changes.

Thursday, 21st May 2020

I cut the grass front and back and trimmed the edges. I put some weed killer on the spots in the block paving where weeds were starting to grow or had not been killed off with the first treatment.

I put up a bird nesting box on the garage wall at the back so we could watch any nesting birds when they used it and I replaced a bulb in the outside light at the back.

Friday, 22nd May 2020

I was putting in the TV recordings for the coming week for most of the day. I was also struggling with a recording of Father Brown from BBC TV from yesterday, the only one of the week that had not recorded properly.

Matthew and Carrie called and sat on the bench on the patio as we spoke with them from the conservatory with the patio doors wide open.

Later in the afternoon, we had to go outside and sort out the blackberry bush. The high winds had caused some of the securing ties to break and I had to replace them with Jenny's help. Three or four branches that would have produced fruit had to be cut off and consigned to the waste bin.

I ended my day by starting to tidy up the TV programmes we had watched the previous week.

Saturday, 23rd May 2020

I hadn't slept well and I didn't feel too well after breakfast so we went for a walk in the fresh air. We walked along the road up to Tottington and then turned right along Turton Road, taking the path down into Two Brooks Valley. It was nice to see the young lambs with their mothers in the fields.

We took the first footpath right, down the hill and over the stream to climb the other side up to Hollymount, where we paid a brief visit to the orchard again. I was hoping to see the blossom on the apple trees but that was, for the most part, long gone and the fruit was just forming.

We wandered over to the bee hives in the bottom corner. There didn't seem to be a great deal of activity, probably because it was so windy.

We returned home via Hollymount and Greenmount golf course, having been out for a couple of hours, so I deduced, with our stops and slow pace, we had probably covered between three and four miles.

After lunch, I finished tidying up the TV programmes we had watched and backed up my files.

I resumed the resurrection of the Father Brown recording and finally managed to recover it using FFmpeg, which I discovered with a Google search. FFmpeg was a very useful set of free media manipulation tools, the only snag being that there was no GUI interface. All of the work had to be done at command-line level, so it was not exactly user-friendly and certainly not aimed at the average PC user.

I was really pleased with my success as I had been really annoyed at missing recording the one episode this last week of Father Brown that I wanted.

Sunday, 24th May 2020

It was a day of preparing more of our car booty for the web site.

Monday, 25th May 2020

After dealing with most of my E-mail backlog and a quick lunch, we went for a walk in the lovely sunshine. The route I had planned was a circular one to Grant's Tower, a local monument on the opposite side of the Irwell Valley (OS Co-ordinates SD 803 157), that was supposed to be sited where the Grants brothers, walking south from Scotland, looked down at the beautiful valley and decided to settle there and the small market town of Ramsbottom was developed.

We walked down the road to Summerseat, taking the path/lane (Robin Road) to the left just past the road junction on the right, with the restaurant and the terraced houses on the right as we walked along it. This led to a path that turned right and climbed steeply through woodland, levelling off and turning right with the Nuttall housing development on the left and woodland on the right.

The path joined the cobbled walkway that came up from the bottom of Summerseat and we turned left. This was part of the Irwell Valley Sculpture Trail. We followed this path towards Ramsbottom as far as the bridge across the river Irwell.

Crossing the bridge, we climbed the steps opposite instead of following the trail left which went to Ramsbottom. The steep climb up the steps led to the bridge across the M66 and the other side presented a more gentle incline, up through a field, then a slightly steeper track to meet the A56.

Crossing the A56, we took the track opposite, angled to the left. This is where the walk became somewhat complicated.

We were using the OS Explorer map and I was looking for the first path off to the right. We passed the house on the right and walked up to enter what seemed to be a large farmyard with a large, static caravan on the right. There was a delightful mare and her foal in a barn. Apart from that, the whole place seemed a little untidy.

There were no way markers. We expected the path to continue along a main track, through a gate but there was a stile into the field to the right of the gate, though no obvious sign of a path beyond. We went over the stile and followed the faint signs of a cart track, with the fence to the left, to the top corner. There was a faint suggestion that the track turned right along the top of the field and we followed that in a straight line until the fence on the left ended and turned a right angle upwards, to the left. With no sign of a path and no way marker, we followed the fence line up the field to the top and then turned right to walk along the top looking for signs of a path.

Half way along towards the far corner, I spotted a ladder style over the wall of the field half-way down the far wall. This was in line with the path we had been walking and we should have carried on across the middle of the field in a straight line.

We continued to walk round the perimeter of the field and down to the style.

Crossing the style, the path was more clearly a cart track and we followed that to the end, where it met a lane.

According to the map, the lane should have gone straight up. It didn't. There was a house in the way. There was a gate to a track opposite but there were no signs on it. There was a path to the right of the gate but that didn't seem to be the one we wanted.

We went through the gate and followed the track as it curved to the left, meeting a chap who was talking to someone in the garden of the house. I asked if he knew where Grant's Tower was and he told us to follow the track round and it would lead us to it.

Sure enough, it did. The tower was in the middle of reconstruction, which seemed to have ceased temporarily due to the Covid-19 "lockdown". I took some pictures and we had a brief rest. It was disappointing that there was no view of Ramsbottom from there. There were some trees in the way, which obviously must have grown since the Grant brothers passed this way.

I had decided to return home a different way and it was now a question of finding a route up to Bury Old Road. We retraced our steps along the cart track we had used to approach the tower for a short distance. This was obviously a diverted track from the original straight track on which the house had been built.

We came to the point where this diverted track crossed the original track between the house we had passed on the way up and another house above it. This second house had been built with its back wall along the old track and used the original lane at the top, leading from Bury Old Road for access. At the bottom, where we were, someone had placed a large, rusty, immovable, iron gate across the old track, making it appear it had been blocked off. Fortunately, there was enough room to pass by the side of this gate onto the track and we asked a chap who was strimming the grass if this gave access to Bury Old Road. He told us to follow the track up to the lane at the top. He didn't seem pleased that I remarked this whole area was devoid of way-markers. He remarked that there weren't that many walkers in the area until the Covid-19 "lockdown". He did not seem to appreciate that the countryside was there for all to share.

We walked up to the junction with Bury Old Road and turned right, following the road until we reached a way-marked footpath over a style down a field to the right, opposite the lane to Ridshaw. We took this path, turning sharp right and then left at the bottom, down to Bast House, through the farm yard and down the lane to the point where it turned sharp right.

There was a style to the left of the gate to the field on this bend, the path continuing in a straight line to the lane down which we had come. This path followed the field fence line, which was on the right, to the bottom corner and then there was another style over the fence into the next

field. The path followed the fence line on the left, alongside the M66 slip road to a stile on the left the led onto the A56.

We crossed the A56, turned left, crossed the M66 and then took the lane immediately afterwards on the right. This path was clearly marked where the lane reached the commercial premises up to the point where it turned left down a field.

We followed the path down the left side of the field, looking for a way out. The stile was hidden from view on the left by a mound of what appeared to be manure. It became visible as we approached it and we followed the track down to the clearly marked path and to a way-marker.

The way-marker was a little misleading in that it did not mark the path to the right, which is the one we wanted, down to the footbridge over the river Irwell. We crossed the river and took the path to the left and upwards to eventually join the path on which we had come.

From there, we followed our outward route home, having covered an estimated 8 to 9 miles in five hours, including breaks.

Tuesday, 26th May 2020

Most of the day was taken up with preparing more car booty for sale.

Wednesday, 27th May 2020

It was another nice, sunny day and I had to spend the morning inside, sorting out my desktop computer that failed to boot from the hard drive. I did not cherish rebuilding this Windows 7 system.

Fortunately, I found an old Windows 7 hard drive, connected it up to the computer and it booted. It took a while to download all the drivers it needed. The antivirus software was well out of date and it needed fixing. At least I had a working system by lunchtime as opposed to having to spend several days rebuilding it.

After lunch, we walked down to Summerseat Garden Centre for some netting to protect the strawberries from the birds and some garden twine or string. With help from a couple of assistants there, I bought two 6m x 2m nets, a large reel of jute garden twine (biodegradable), a reel of cotton string and I also found a pair of riggers, which were on my “needed list.

Thursday, 28th May 2020

We spent the day in the garden, putting one of the nets on the strawberry and herb raised beds, seeding some more lettuce and some more carrots, generally tidying up and I repaired one of the raised beds that had a broken top piece on one side. That latter job took some time.

Friday, 29th May 2020

It was a 6 a.m. start for a shopping top-up trip to Sainsbury's at Heaton Park, ensuring we were there early, Jenny being second in the queue when the "oldies" were allowed in at 8 a.m.

It was 9:30 a.m. by the time we left and we called at Dennis Gore's chemist on the way back for a bottle of my Vogel Saw Palmetto.

We stopped off to see Matthew and Carrie briefly and to collect a couple of items before returning home for lunch.

The afternoon was spent in the garden, tidying up and chatting with Frank and Gwen who came round as they were passing.

Saturday, 30th May 2020

Finally work started on fitting the new skirting in the small bedroom, something that should have been done over two years ago.

In order to remove the old skirting from the wall behind the radiator and install the new skirting, it was necessary to remove the radiator. That required the system to be drained.

Draining the system using the drain cock on the kitchen radiator and the hose pipe, using a drip tray under the connection to the drain cock, was straight forward.

While that was in progress and after the pressure in the system had been eliminated, I took the opportunity to replace the temporary bleed valve and cap in the bathroom radiator with the proper Aeon ones. When Pitacs supplied the original Aeon radiator, the company omitted to ship the top fittings and they were sent to me after the radiator had been installed, the plumber providing his own.

That posed my first challenge. I needed an 8 mm Allen Key. I had to go down to borrow one from Matthew after lunch. I added one to my shopping list.

I had turned off the valves on the radiator in the back bedroom because I was going to remove it when I started decorating it. I turned off the feed valve on the small bedroom radiator. Turning off the return valve on the small bedroom radiator was my second challenge. It was a five-sided nut, partially rebated in its outer casing. I eventually managed to turn it off using an 11 mm, open-ended spanner, end-on. I put the five-sided, thin-walled spanner on my shopping list. I needed to turn off the valves so I could remove the radiator.

Jenny had commented that she had no hot water. I went into the garage where the boiler was throwing a wobbler. I turned off the central heating, powered off the boiler, powered it on again and then performed a reset. After that, it was alright.

The next step was to ensure no water could enter the heating system. I turned off the gate valves.

I was now in a position to remove the radiator, having already freed the old skirting ready for removal. My third challenge was not having a spanner of the correct size to undo the valve nuts. The 30 mm AF spanner was added to my shopping list as a priority.

That would wait while the following day.

Sunday, 31st May 2020

After breakfast and tidying up, we went down to B&Q for the 30 mm AF spanner I needed, having first checked online that the store had the item and it was in stock.

The approach road was shared with a drive-through takeaway and the access road was blocked by vehicles queuing for food from it. The access road took a sharp right turn just past the left access to the take-away and it was impossible to see if any vehicles were coming out of B&Q, making it unsafe to pass the queuing traffic.

That didn't stop some impatient idiots though and there were a few near-misses on the bend. Jenny asked if I wanted her to go to the corner and wave me on if it was clear and I said that would be useful. As she did so, the twit behind me pulled out and overtook the queue. I followed and picked Jenny up just after the turn.

We parked the car and joined the long queue of people waiting to go into the store at 2 metre intervals. The queue moved steadily and we didn't have to wait too long.

At the entrance, sanitizer for the trolley and hand-sanitizer were provided along with a paper roll for cleaning.

I found the spanner I wanted and also picked up an 18 inch clamp which was on my wish-list for another repair job. I looked for a couple of other items on my list but didn't find them.

On the way back, I announced my displeasure with the aid of my horn at two vehicles on the wrong side of the access road, queue-jumping.

We called at Tesco where I dropped Jenny off to join the queue of people waiting to go into the store while I went to fill up the car with diesel, paying at the pump, where the receipt printer was out of order yet again. I made a mental note of the cost, parked the car and went to wait outside the store for Jenny.

Jenny was much longer than I expected and my back started to ache so I returned to the car. Jenny eventually found me and we came home for a late lunch outside on the bench.

After a leisurely lunch, tidying up and putting out Jenny's washing line, it was almost 4 p.m., time to listen to Jazz Record Requests, which was pretty rubbish this week.