

Greenmount May 2023

Monday, 1st May 2023

After yesterday's downpour, the sun was doing its best to break through the thin layer of clouds but the forecast for the village party was not good, with a 30% chance of rain expected for the first hour, from noon to 1 p.m.

We were up at 7 a.m. and Jenny was planning on going to the old school for 9:30, to be there when the cakes arrived, from 10 a.m. onwards, for the stall on the village green that Jenny and Rachel were managing. My role was to be ready to help ferry the cakes the short distance down the road from the old school to the village green when asked. Later I planned to take pictures of the event.

Meanwhile, I continued with tidying up my discs.

The day unfolded as expected, although, thankfully, without the rain and I collected Jenny and Rachel, together with all the bits and pieces, from the village green, calling to drop off a few items at the old school on the way home.

Tuesday, 2nd May 2023

I went for my third filling at the dentist and then Jenny and I went for a blood test at the local surgery. We led exciting lives.

We called at the dispensary for the medication we needed and I bought this week's copy of the Radio Times.

Having survived the ordeal, I started cleaning the lounge.

Wednesday, 3rd May 2023

Jenny went for a walk with Gwen while I continued cleaning the lounge.

Thursday, 4th May 2023

It was polling day for the local elections and we went to vote. We were supporting John Southworth, who was the husband of our village chairperson, Julie and both were involved with local community affairs. As it later transpired, John, the Labour candidate lost to the present Conservative councillor, Khalid Hussain by 82 votes. I knew Khalid Hussain and he was a very nice chap who also did a great deal for the local community but not in the same practical way as John.

I spent the rest of the day working on the computer.

Friday, 5th May 2023

We had a grocery shopping trip to Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath, exceeding our weekly grocery budget by about £12, even though I had increased it by 20%. The politicians and the Bank of England would have us believe that inflation was running at around 10% to 15%. In practice, it was around double that.

The outward journey was fine except for the hold-up on the main A56 road where resurfacing work was being undertaken near Blackford Bridge. This was the main route between Bury and Manchester and, as such, it was a very busy road. It would have been much better if the work had been confined to overnight operations.

The return journey was painfully slow on the M60 ring road. I was unable to exceed 10 m.p.h. for about two-thirds of the journey. I managed to avoid the hold-up on the A56, though, by using the M66, which ran more-or-less parallel to and east of the A56 from Prestwich, where I normally exit the motorway, to Bury. I did expect some delays as we travelled through Bury but traffic was flowing quite freely.

I finished off the TV listings for next week before tea.

Saturday, 6th May 2023

It was the day of the coronation of Charles III and his second wife, Camilla, was to become Queen. Most people who did not make the trip to London to witness the procession were, in all probability, glued to the TV screens for most of the day, the order of service running to some 23 pages.

While I thought it nice we had a monarchy, I wasn't about to waste my day drooling over the event. I wasn't really one for formal occasions but I wouldn't have minded having a chat with Charles sometime. since I believed we had some common interests, like organic farming and The Goons.

We spent our day at the old school working on the electrical jumble, which had piled up somewhat.

Sunday, 7th May 2023

I was taxi driver for the morning, taking Rachel and Jenny to Bury to look for some items Rachel wanted for a present she was making as a gift for a colleague at work who was leaving.

I took the opportunity to drop off some rubbish at the recycling centre in Bury, drive down to B&WQ at Heap Bridge to buy some shrink-wrap to make a waterproof cable joint, which proved to be a waste of time and to call at Tesco for some diesel.

Rachel not finding everything she wanted either, we went to Clarks in Ramsbottom, which proved to be successful. I waited in the car, listening to Trad Jazz CDs. It was a lovely, warm, sunny day.

My afternoon was spent sorting out a problem with my desktop PC. It had recently truncated a few recordings, which, I suspected, was due to disc errors.

While the disc checking was churning away, I undertook a few administrative jobs like scanning and filing as well as helping Rachel with her task.

Monday 8th May 2023

The one warm, fine, sunny day had proven too much and we were back with an overcast sky and rain. That was mor or less the forecast for the coming week. A heavy price to pay for one fine day.

I started my busy day with a brief task for D-CaFF and more administrative work.

It struck me that life took a great deal of organising. It was strange that other animals just seemed to get on with life and we, the most intelligent species on earth, made life so complicated for each other. One would think it should be the other way round. Or maybe it was just that we were the dumb ones after all.

I finally managed to finish cleaning the lounge, Jenny dealing with the top of the piano between cooking tea.

Tuesday, 9th May 2023

A bit of administration was needed between preparations for the trip to Queen Street Mill in Burnley and delayed our departure by some ten minutes.

Losing our way in Burnley didn't help and we arrived about fifteen minutes late, not that we had missed much of the guided tour.

Our tour guide was brilliant, having worked as a weaver. I had been to the mill before and, at that time, one of the boilers was lit and we had a demonstration of the looms working in the weaving shed. On this occasion, there was no steam to power the great engine, so the demonstrations we had were powered by electricity. I loved the smell of steam and oil, so I missed that aspect of the tour. Nonetheless it was most interesting and enjoyable to picture what life must have been like only a few generations ago. I thought it was important that people of today should understand how their ancestors lived and worked and what life in the past must have been like for many. I supposed, for some, perhaps, there had been little or no change at all, which was very sad considering how wealthy some people were. As I often said, "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."

Wednesday, 10th May 2023

My daily routine was to check for messages after breakfast and there were a few texts and e-mails that needed attention before checking that the problem with my desktop truncating TV recordings had been resolved by performing a rigorous check of the system disc. That did seem to have fixed the problem.

Mike came across to ask if the disc he had bought for securing his data was of the correct type. It was a SATA disc and Mike was contemplating buying a laptop so I said he needed an external, USB drive not an internal SATA drive. He said he could change it. I also suggested he run his new laptop configuration by me before buying it.

I joined Jenny in our bedroom to clean it and had the task of crawling under the bed with the hand-held vacuum cleaner until it ran out of battery power. I then resorted to the mains-powered upright vacuum cleaner until it was time for lunch.

I finished off the last item in the lounge, the bookcase full of DVDs before resuming work in the bedroom.

We left off at about 4 p.m. to drive up to see Bob and Marie to give Bob his birthday card and we stayed chatting for nearly two hours.

When we returned home, Jenny commenced the preparation of tea while I tidied up the bedroom enough for us to be able to sleep tonight.

Thursday, 11th May 2023

It wasn't a very nice day, with lots of rain. That didn't bother me since most of my day was taken up with bringing my web site up to date as regards my diary and the car-boot larger and collectable items. I didn't get round to publishing the updates to my web site.

Friday, 12th May 2023

I managed to dodge the rain showers long enough to put out the waste paper and cardboard bin for emptying and restore it to its resting place afterwards.

I also succeeded in finishing off the TV recording schedules for the coming week, having started them yesterday.

We fitted in the afternoon at D-CaFF and packing the car and trailer, ready for the car boot sale tomorrow.

Saturday, 13th May 2023

We were up at 5 a.m. and, having pumped up the tyres on the car and trailer, we arrived at the Emmanuel Centre on the nearby Longsight Road by 7:30. We were the first there and Jo, the organiser, arrived shortly afterwards. The time arranged for people to arrive was 8 a.m. so we were quite early.

Although buyers were not supposed to arrive until 10 a.m., some did come earlier, although we didn't make many early sales. Business did improve slightly as the day wore on and we made one significant sale of one of our more expensive items on the table which made our day worthwhile.

We came home for about 1 p.m. The sale was supposed to end at 2 p.m. but there were not many customers after 12:30 so we packed up early.

Jenny and Rachel helped me put the trailer back in the garage and I unpacked the car, putting most of the content on top of the items of the trailer while Jenny prepared lunch.

After lunch, we went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park. That was more of a challenge than expected.

First, I could not find my manbag which contained all my medical accessories and I had to make up a new manbag to take with me. We called at the Cricket Club to ask if anyone had handed in a manbag after D-CaFF yesterday but no-one had.

Second, having made our way through Bury down to the M66 at Heap Bridge, there was a huge queue of traffic trying to join the motorway. I pulled out of the queue and made my way back up to Bury town centre to use the A56 road instead, even though I expected congestion on that due to the resurfacing works. As it turned out, the work had been suspended for the weekend but there was still a lot of traffic and progress was slow.

Jenny went into the store while I called Joani Beale to ask if anyone had found my manbag. She said no-one had reported finding a bag and she would ask the question of the D-CaFF volunteers and let me know if anyone had found my bag.

I found Jenny perusing the gluten-free shelves in the store. She had called at Specsavers and picked up her new spectacles.

It was 8 p.m. by the time we returned home and 9 p.m. by the time we had our evening meal.

It had been a long, trying day.

Sunday, 14th May 2023

I was working in the garden, cutting the grass, trimming the edges, cleaning the lawn mower and the strimmer, and tidying up the borders.

I had a break for lunch and resumed work afterwards, the priority being to tidy up the items I didn't need for the borders since rain was forecast at about 6 p.m. Having finished the borders by 4:15, I stopped work early, completely shattered after two very active days in succession.

The job for tomorrow was to feed the grass, which had not been fed for ages and the borders, particularly the fruit trees, for a second time. The raised beds also needed touching up and I needed to put the raised frame on the large strawberry bed ready for the netting to keep the birds off. I also needed to order some nematodes to kill off any slugs that were lurking around. Jenny had asked me to dig up and pot the rhubarb, since she could no longer eat it due to her vascular medication. We had intended selling it at the car boot sale yesterday but I had not had the time or the weather to pot it.

Monday, 15th May 2023

We started our morning by clearing the worktops in the kitchen, expecting someone from Paul Davies in Bolton to come and measure up for new worktops.

Jenny had a podiatrist appointment in Bury at 9:45 and, leaving Rachel in charge, we just made it in time. I dropped Jenny off and then went to find a disabled parking spot. There were none free nearby, so I used a pay-to-park spot on the roadside and displayed Jenny's badge there. I passed the time by listening to a CD of Humphrey Lyttleton and his band and managed three or four tracks before Jenny joined me.

We detoured to Tesco, essentially for some white vinegar so I could make some weedkiller. Not intending to buy much, we took in a basket. I later fetched an empty trolley.

We came home for lunch. No-one from Paul Davies had been, so I telephoned to find out when to expect a visit. I was told Martin would telephone me later, which he did. He said we had discussed a visit week commencing the 15th and someone would be coming on the 17th.

The plan on the 17th was to loosen all the worktops ready for removal, except for the worktop in which our sink was housed. That would be removed and the new, undermounted sink installed on a supporting board. The tap would not be reinstalled until the new worktop was fitted, sometime next week, most probably on Monday. We would be without water in the kitchen for at least five days. At least the sink would be connected to the drain.

After lunch, I had intended mixing up the weedkiller and applying it to the weeds in the block paving but rain was forecast so I was going to do something else in the garden instead.

Jenny wanted to empty the trailer of all the car booty and I gave her some help to do that. I ended up sorting all the car booty in the garage with Jenny until 5:30 p.m. It did rain briefly but nowhere near as much as forecast. That didn't bother us under the car port.

The plan for tomorrow was to tidy up the back of the garage.

Tuesday, 16th May 2023

We had a busy day in the garden and in the garage, where there was more tidying to do.

The highlight of my day was mixing my own weedkiller using white vinegar, salt and washing-up liquid and applying it to the weeds on the drive and the front path.

Wednesday, 17th May 2023

Martin and two other chaps arrived from Paul Davies before I left to fetch Rachel from Finney's Garage after she had dropped off her car for its annual service.

Martin put a new spring in one of the top cupboards, the old one having broken some months ago.

The two chaps proceeded to loosen and remove the old worktops and fit the new sink but they did not connect it up to the drains and did not install the tap.

The old worktops, which they removed, were left outside the back for me to reuse or take to the tip.

We did a little more tidying and then we had a run to the tip before lunch.

After lunch, I put together the papers for the village committee meeting tonight, called at short notice.

I finished tidying up in the garage as far as I could. Rachel and Jenny helped me store the old worktops from the kitchen in the garage and I put the trailer away. I had moved it earlier to clear a path through the garage.

I had a quick shower before tea and then went to the village committee meeting.

Thursday, 18th May 2023

I can't say it was a particularly productive day but I did manage to make some progress with odd jobs.

I repaired the long-standing damage to the car boot protector. It had a large tear in the back and a smaller one in the back left corner. The major one I repaired with epoxy resin and a bit of superglue to finish off a small bit I had missed at the very top. I simply applied superglue to the smaller one.

While I had the superglue to hand, I also repaired some damage to the boot lining on front right corner. The car boot tables had snagged on the trim and ripped off a short length. I glued the loose ends down and searched high and low for the missing bit so I could glue that on. Until the car boot sale, the missing piece had been sitting in the boot. When we packed the car last Saturday, I moved it out of harm's way. I was so successful that I couldn't find it after hours of searching.

I used the rest of the weed killer I had mixed on the larger plants at the front that were not showing signs of dying off yet. I also applied some to the larger weeds at the back. I needed more white vinegar to make another batch. It did seem to be working on some of the weeds so I intended to persevere with this more environmentally friendly mixture of salt, eco-friendly washing-up liquid and white vinegar.

I dealt with my e-mails, updated the accounts and did the budget planning for next month, put out the bins for collection tomorrow and started going through the TV listings for the coming week.

The main task was to prepare Jenny's brother's (Wilf's) birthday card, which required a verse on a fishing theme. I had found one on the internet and modified it to suit, since it

was obviously American. I finished that at about 10:15 p.m., updated this account of the day's events and retired for the evening.

Friday, 19th May 2023

Grocery shopping was preceded by a visit to Paul Davies in Bolton to pay the balance for our new kitchen sink and worktops.

From there we headed down the motorway to Unicorn in Chorlton where, apart from groceries, we bought some organic herbs, lettuce and more beans for planting out, except for the basil, which we kept indoors.

We motored comfortably on to Waitrose in Broadheath, detouring round the roadworks in Chorlton. Waitrose was something of a disappointment, not having a lot of what we wanted and many prices of items we could obtain elsewhere being higher. There was no gluten-free sandwich to be found for lunch either so we bypassed the café.

Jenny had complained about being overcharged for some items on our previous visit but without any success.

It seemed our relationship with Waitrose was at an end.

The journey home wasn't too bad, except that I forgot about the roadworks on the main road up to Bury. Fortunately, the delay was not too long, since we were returning earlier than usual and avoided the school run.

We had a snack lunch at home and I continued scanning the TV listings for next week for programmes to record.

Saturday 20th May 2023

We went to Sheffield to see Jenny's brother, Wilf and his wife Anne. It was Wilf's birthday on the coming Wednesday.

We arrived at the Meadowhall Premier Inn at about 2 p.m. Check-in was not until 3 p.m. but we thought we might be able to check in early. There was a £10 surcharge for doing so. We decided to come back later and went up to Wilf and Anne's house, which was about five minutes' drive away.

We stayed all afternoon and went out to the Acorn Inn, a Greene King pub, in Burncross. We had stopped off there on the way to book a table for 6 p.m., which was Jenny's idea, because we could not find anywhere online. The meal was excellent.

We took Anne and Wilf home and stayed until about 9:30 p.m.

Check-in at the Premier Inn was not exactly straightforward. The programming of the room key was proving problematic and only worked after the young lady on reception switched the device off and on again, a common cure for technical problems in my many years of experience.

The room was fine except we could only find one pillow each when we were used to more and only one hand towel and one bath towel. We expected one each. We didn't bother to ask for any extra items and managed with what we had for the one night.

Sunday, 21st May 2023

We had a light, gluten-free breakfast, which we had not pre-booked. The restaurant/bar was nice and the staff were most helpful.

After breakfast, we checked out and went up to Anne and Wilf's house for a chat for a few hours. They gave us some car boot items to bring home and some old logs that had been lying around for ages for our fire.

It was mid afternoon by the time we reached home and we had an early, tuna salad tea, having skipped lunch.

We watched the three episodes in the third season of Vienna Blood, which I had recorded some time ago.

Monday, 22nd May 2023

We were up early to prepare for the fitting of our new worktops.

The two chaps arrived with the worktops at about 9:30 a.m. and brought the worktops in through the garage. We left them to it, Jenny having supplied them with coffee.

Although there were a few snags installing the worktops, the end result looked good and we were advised to leave it until tomorrow for the sealant to set.

Meanwhile, Jenny and I pottered round in the garden.

Tuesday, 23rd May 2023

The plumber who was scheduled for late afternoon yesterday was rescheduled for this morning to allow the sealant to set overnight.

Two chaps arrived at about 9:15 a.m. and took most of the morning to fit the tap and the drains to the sink. The whole drainage system, which included the washer and dishwasher was refitted.

When it came to paying for the service, I discovered that the plumber was none other than the chap who owned the kitchen business, being the son of Paul Davies, who had semi-retired.

I had spent my morning testing and pricing electrical equipment for our car boot sales and for the old school. I also started work on Ann's DAB radio and managed to remove three of the four screws holding on the case. The last screw would not budge and I did not have the proper screwdriver which was thin enough to go into the aperture, the screws being

about 50mm inside. I left it until I could acquire a screwdriver that would reach and fit the head of the screw.

We tidied up and had lunch after the plumbers had left.

Our afternoon commenced with a trip into Ramsbottom, essentially for some fish for tea from Tesco. While we were there, I noticed there was an offer of 25% off six or more bottles of wine and Yellow Tail Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio were both only £6.25, £1 cheaper than usual with our Tesco Club Card. We treated ourselves to two bottles of each plus two bottles of Yellowtail Bubbles at £10 a bottle. That would normally be a high price but with the 25% off, it was far more reasonable.

We had started with a tour of the charity shops and we called at Plentiful for some organic caster sugar.

Returning home, I finally updated my web site for the first time this year. That took me nicely to tea time.

Wednesday, 24th May 2023

Routine jobs were finished by 10:30 a.m. Since I was commencing taxi-driving duties at 11:30, I didn't see much point in starting anything that was going to take a lot of time so I decided to load up the laptop and do a bit of administration.

It took me nearly the hour to deal with my e-mails and to change the black cartridge in the Canon 2950 printer and make it print. I really needed a new, decent printer.

Mike brought his computer for me to try to repair and a USB drive so that I could back up his data. I removed his hard drive and connected it to the second SATA on my desktop, plugged his external hard drive into my PC and commenced a copy of his user files from his hard drive to his portable drive. When that had finished, I replaced his hard drive and put the USB drive on one side to return to him. I tried his PC again but it refused to boot up or display anything on the screen.

I turned my attention to my desktop PC, which had been having some problems with the system drive. I performed a copy of my system drive to the spare backup disc and then loaded up from the backup disc. At some point, I needed to reformat the troublesome disc and then copy my Windows 7 system back onto it so I had a back up in case my hard drive failed.

Thursday, 25th May 2023

I spent my day in the garden, cutting the grass, tidying the edges, cleaning the lawn mower and strimmer and so forth.

I had a Civic Society meeting in the evening.

Friday, 26th May 2023

We went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park and Tesco at Prestwich.

The outward journey was interesting to say the least. Heading up the ring road in Bury towards Manchester Road, I was in the inside lane. Due to queuing traffic ahead, going into Bury, I decided to move to the outside line, checked my mirror and put on my indicator. The driver in the large white fish van coming up the outside lane decided to speed up as I made my manoeuvre. I assumed his or her intention was to prevent me making my manoeuvre, something he or she failed to do.

Shortly afterwards, a driver in the left lane started to pull out into the right lane without warning and I had to brake hard. By this time, the van was pretty close to me and only just stopped in time to avoid running into my vehicle. What an appalling piece of driving.

We continued on our journey and the van alter overtook me. I preferred to have it in front of me than behind me.

We called to see Matthew and Carrie on the way to Sainsbury's store.

I was pleased to find the journey home was uneventful.

My afternoon was taken up with preparing the TV recordings for next week.

Saturday, 27th May 2023

I was working on the patio all day, dismantling the post lamp. My intention had been to repair it but it was too far gone. I placed it in the trailer ready for weighing in at the scrap metal merchant in Bury.

Sunday, 28th May 2023

We were working on the electrical jumble at the old school for most of the day.

When I came home, at about 5:30 p.m., I had a look at Mike's PC. I replaced the battery on the motherboard but the PC did not provide any display on the screen. I decided to remove the graphics card and use the onboard HDMI connection instead. That worked and the PC booted up but not knowing Mike's password, I could not log in. I went across the road to Mike and Liz's house to let him know his PC was working, minus the graphics card but they were not in. The removal of the graphics card meant that it was not possible to connect to a monitor using a VGA or DVI cable and Mike had been using the former.

I cleaned the graphics card using a hand-held vacuum cleaner and also with some isopropyl alcohol, some cotton-wool buds and a wooden toothpick with the intention of trying it again.

Monday, 29th May 2023

Being a Bank Holiday and the long weekend over which the East Lancashire Railway had a 1940s theme, we drove into Ramsbottom. I had seen the World War II bomber and two-fighter escort fly over as I was working outside on Saturday and someone at the old school yesterday mentioned a bomber had flown over again that morning.

It was busy but I think we had missed most of the activity, which had been concentrated over the past two days. I was pleased the weather had been fine, sunny and warm for the whole weekend for everyone to enjoy the event and I was sorry we had missed most of the fun.

We toured the charity shops that were open and pottered round, looking at vintage cars and a few military vehicles.

Returning to the car, we drove up to see Bob and Marie and spent most of the afternoon chatting in their garden.

Having missed lunch, we came home for an early tea.

I also nearly forgot to water the back garden again and ended up doing it in the dark.

Tuesday, 30th May 2023

It was another unproductive day. I didn't feel at all well when I woke up. I ached all over and it took me a while to make it downstairs.

The first job of the day was to put an order into Healthy Supplies, the only item being a large bag of Sorghum flour so Jenny could bake some more bread.

I dealt with my E-mails and then finished off Mikes desktop PC, the conclusion being that the graphics board was faulty and it probably wasn't worth replacing it since I discovered the PC had the required connectivity on the motherboard after all. Mike collected his PC after I had removed the graphics card and it was loading up perfectly well after that.

I walked up to the dental surgery at Homcombe Brook with Jenny for her check-up and that went well. We called at the village convenience store on the way back for next week's Radio Times.

I did manage to mix some home-made, eco-friendly weed-killer and apply it to the side passage block-paving and that round the conservatory before tea.

Wednesday, 31st May 2023

It was late morning before it warmed up enough to start working outside but at least it didn't rain, which allowed me to feed the grass back and front.

While doing that, I spotted the window cleaner next door and asked him to clean our windows, which the chaps did and I arranged for them to return in a month's time.

The next job was to put the netting over the strawberry beds and I left off for lunch.

Jenny helped me finish that job, which was interrupted by Mike, who was having a problem booting his PC from which I had removed the graphics card. I went across to have a look at it.

On powering on, the PC beeped five times and then refused to do anything. I powered it off and back on again and it booted into a menu choice of loading the default settings or entering Set Up (the BIOS configuration). I loaded the default settings and carried on. The PC was obviously not remembering the configuration details despite having changed the CMOS battery on the motherboard or there was a setting on the motherboard that told it to look for the graphics card when it powered on.

The PC seemed alright after I had loaded it as far as loading Windows was concerned. Therein lay another problem, which I thought had been due to the PC not being connected to my home network. It did not automatically log into Mike's Microsoft account and loaded a temporary user profile. I pondered the problem of his local PC account not synchronising with his Microsoft account and could not find a solution. Searching the web came up with suggestions but Mike's version of Windows 10 did not seem to have the options that were needed.

I was toying with completely rebuilding Windows 10. Then I hit upon the idea of creating a PC account to match Mike's Microsoft account and when I logged into the new account on the PC, the problem disappeared. I started to copy Mike's personal data to the new account and since that was taking a long time, I left Mike with instructions on how to complete the task.

I came home and resumed my gardening.

After finishing off the netting of the strawberry beds and packing up, it was time for tea.

The final job of the evening at about 9:45 p.m. was to water in the lawn food back and front and to water the raised beds, the fruit bushes and the potted plants.

As for the month ahead, The dry weather was forecast to continue for another five days at least, with only a 10% possibility of rain tomorrow morning but I thought it unlikely since the same applied to this morning and it remained dry, although the overcast sky made it quite cool until the sun put in an appearance around noon.