

Greenmount November 2022

Tuesday, 1st November 2022

My first major task was to follow up on my next review of my urological problem.

I did not have the telephone number for the booking team to which I needed to speak so I used the number I had last time, when I was transferred. I started off as fifth in the queue and my call was finally answered by a real person (imagine that – a real person) within ten minutes or so. The lady with whom I spoke gave me the number I should have dialled, which was the booking team based at The Royal Oldham Hospital and she transferred me.

To my amazement, my call was answered straight away by another real person. Two real people in the NHS administration department – this Government spared no expense!

From the conversation, I formed the opinion that my case had been overlooked and instead of confirming my appointment on the 8th November, eight weeks after my last review, as I was told it would be, there were no appointments available until 29th December. It seemed it was fortunate I pursued this matter, otherwise I might have been missed altogether. I didn't think it was a case of people not doing their job properly; it was more a combination of not enough people to do the job that needed to be done and not enough, good-quality training.

While I booked the appointment, I also asked about a private consultation and was told I would have to discuss that with my GP so I logged an AskMyGP request.

I spent the rest of the day dealing with other various bits of administration.

Wednesday, 2nd November 2022

We started our annual kitchen clean prior to Jenny and Rachel's annual baking session for Santa's Christmas Cracker, our community centre (Greenmount old school) Christmas Fair. I cleaned the kitchen tiles above the kitchen cupboards and the whole of the wall behind the radiator, as well as the long wall on the garage side. That left the back wall and the dining room adjoining wall still to clean. I needed to apply some sealant to the base of the tiles on the long wall in a couple of places.

Thursday, 3rd November 2022

We decided to switch our weekly grocery shopping to today. The weather forecast for tomorrow was for sunshine, the only really nice day of the week and Jenny needed to bake some bread, which required heat for it to rise. The conservatory came in very useful for that when the sun was out.

We had a trip to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park and Tesco at Prestwich. While we had decided not to use the central heating because of the profiteering our Conservative Government was loathe to do anything major about, we were determined not to

compromise on the quality of our food and we continued to shop organically as much as possible because it was far better for the environment on which we all depend and, much more importantly, our children and grandchildren will depend in the future. We believed it was better for us.

Friday, 4th November 2022

It was a very cold morning, sunny with a cold, light wind.

Jenny spent the morning baking bread, after hanging out the washing.

I had put out the line and dealt with the rubbish before completing the TV recording schedule for next week.

Saturday, 5th November 2022

We were up just after 6:00 a.m. and round at the old school for the Table Top sale for about 8:30 a.m. Our electrical stall went very well and we sold a few expensive items.

We came home for lunch and I helped Jenny pack the car for the table-top sale of some of our car booty at St. Michael's Church Hall, Whitefield, tomorrow morning.

Christine Taylor telephoned to say she had a problem with her e-mail and I arranged to go round to her house tomorrow afternoon.

Sunday, 6th November 2022

We were up at 5:30 a.m. and on the road to the table-top sale at St. Michael's Church Hall, Whitefield by 7:30. The doors were already open when we arrived and our stall was ready well before the 9:45 start.

Trade was slow and steady. Our total amount in the bag came to just over £44, which, after taking off our £10 float and the £12 for the table, didn't count for much. The one saving grace was that I sold the He-Man figures and Castle Grayskull, advertised on my web site for £195 to a very nice gentleman for £140 cash and he came to collect it after we had returned home and had a quick lunch.

I went round to have a look at Christine's e-mail problem at about 3 p.m. I spent two and a half hours trying to gain access to her TalkTalk account to reset her account password and her e-mail password for her since she was having difficulty accessing the TalkTalk mail servers. I was conversing with a chap called Mark using the online chat service and got precisely nowhere. In the end I told Mark I was giving up and he then consulted a supervisor who said, guess what. TalkTalk was having problems with their accounts and I should try later or tomorrow to fix Christine's problem.

Christine suspected her e-mail account had been hacked because some of her contacts (including me) had received e-mails, supposedly from Christine, asking for help. I saw immediately from the originating e-mail address it was a scam and blacklisted the sender.

Others had replied asking how they could help and they were asked if they could send some money. Christine could not access her Talktalk mail account and could not log on to the billing account either; the passwords seemed to have changed. My guess was that TalkTalk has been the target of yet another successful assault by the hacking community and they were struggling once again to plug the hole in their defences.

My plan was to return tomorrow, late afternoon, to try to resolve the problem for Christine and her husband, John.

Meanwhile, Jenny had bagged up the remains of last night's lasagne and put it in the freezer, cooked a chicken for tea, washed all the dirty dishes from last evening, breakfast and lunch, fetched in some kindling and lit the fire. I fetched in more wood for the fire when I came home and I was half an hour late administering her eye drops.

Monday, 7th November 2022

I had set the lounge thermostat to switch on the heating this morning for the first time this autumn. The heating was programmed to switch off at 9:30 a.m. and was not supposed to fire up again until the evening. In the event, it came on in the early afternoon, so I switched it off. The thermostat obviously needed reprogramming.

The plan had been to resume the kitchen cleaning after unpacking the car. The latter, together with some sorting of the car booty in the garage, took most of the day.

I dropped off some old school jumble on the way back to try to resolve the problem with Christine's e-mails at 4 p.m.

We had got to the point where we were trying to recreate the account, registered in John's name. After an hour and a half, using live chat, we had made no progress. I suggested that John should stop the TalkTalk direct debit and demand some compensation. John was talking about cancelling his TalkTalk service.

I was home for about 5:30 again. Jenny had started the fire in the lounge wood-burner, so we didn't bother with the central heating.

Tuesday, 8th November 2022

We didn't drag ourselves out of bed until 9 a.m. this morning so there wasn't much time to do anything particularly constructive since we were going to Joyce's (a lady who used to help out at the dementia café, D-CaFF) funeral at about 12:30.

We arrived at the church about ten minutes before the hearse. The excellent service was Roman Catholic, which had elements to which we were not accustomed and lasted about an hour. The sun shone for Joyce as the funeral procession left the church for the burial in Bury cemetery. We did not attend the burial or the following wake. Instead we headed home, calling briefly for a top-up grocery shop at Tesco in Bury.

I made the fire in the lounge while Jenny prepared a chicken pizza for tea.

Wednesday, 9th November 2022

We resumed the kitchen cleaning. I finished off the tiled walls, cleaned the UPVC door frames on the inside, cleaned the door glass inside and out and cleaned both wooden doors on both sides while Jenny cleaned all the wooden units and the worktops.

That just left the glass panels in the wooden doors, the tiled floor and the range cooker to clean, not necessarily in that order.

Having a fire every evening was depleting our log supply and I needed to cut up some more large bits of tree trunks.

Thursday, 10th November 2022

It was my intention to start wood-cutting while Jenny made some soup for herself and prepared her cakes and the scones from Lynn Archer her husband, David, delivered, for D-CaFF tomorrow.

Instead I cleaned the glass panels in the two wooden doors in the kitchen, cleaned out the wood-burner in the lounge, cut some kindling because we had none left, filled up the wood basket so we could have a fire later and put out the bottle/plastic/can recycle bin for emptying tomorrow.

While I was doing all this, Lorna came up for a chat with Jenny and, afterwards, we had lunch.

After lunch, I dealt with a few e-mails, finished off looking through next week's TV listings for programmes to record, having done most of the work while watching other pre-recorded programmes during the week and listened to last week's recording of Jazz Record Requests, which concentrated largely on the forthcoming London Jazz Festival. Fortunately, being a recording, I could skip all the preamble gobbledegook on the individual tracks from performers at the Festival and I only had to listen to the first few seconds of each track if I didn't like it. Since I didn't like any of the tracks, it didn't take long. Obviously, there were no modern-day Trad Jazz performers at the Festival. Maybe there weren't many Trad Jazz fans out there.

Over the last couple of days, I had received more examples of first-hand experiences about the way in which the NHS was failing patients, with dire consequences. The lack of sufficient investment and planning in public health and social care, the withdrawal of free training for doctors and nurses, the failure to pay nurses and junior doctors a decent wage, the emphasis on privatisation, the lack of forward, long-term planning and sheer political incompetence of successive Governments since the 1970s were responsible and continued to be responsible for countless premature deaths that should have been prevented with proper care and facilities.

There was an answer to the problem and that was quite simply the redistribution of wealth in this country and, indeed, around the world. With the greed and selfishness that existed in those with the power to act, this was not going to happen, not even to save us from the effects of global warming that will undoubtedly result in our extinction. There will be no

winners and wealth will, ultimately, count for nothing. To coin a cliché, the day of reckoning is almost upon us.

Friday, 11th November 2022

We went to the Remembrance Day service at the church and, after a brief snack for lunch, to help out at D-CaFF at the cricket club. Our fiend, Lorna, came with us.

Saturday, 12th November 2022

The plan had been to go down to Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose at Broadheath for our weekly grocery shopping but since we were up late and didn't leave until turned 11 a.m., we went to Sainsbury's at Heaton park and Tesco in Prestwich instead, both being somewhat more local. Even so, we were not back until 3 p.m. and I had forgotten to take my medical bag with me which caused me some discomfort until I returned home.

I tanked up the car with diesel fuel at Sainsbury's, the cost of which had risen by over 30% thanks to the insatiable greed of the oil producers.

Sunday, 13th November 2022

The significance of the date didn't dawn on me until early afternoon.

I spent most of the morning trying to sort out why my laptop would not connect to my desktop again. I then discovered that my wireless network extender had been assigned the same IP address as my desktop PC by the router's DHCP system. I thought that most odd.

I rebooted the network extender, tried allocating the PC a fixed IP address, put it back to DHCP allocation, reloaded the ethernet to wireless device connected to the desktop several times and it wasn't until I rebooted the broadband router that it started working again. The network extender and the desktop still had the same IP address allocated and I hadn't a clue why. I decided, at some stage, to try allocating fixed IP addresses to each of the desktop and the network extender but since it was working I left it alone for the present.

I then decided to save the web site link for configuring the land extender to my Edge favourites and spent another hour trying to figure out how to reorganise the favourites. It wasn't obvious how to do that and I eventually found a very helpful web site which put me on the right track. Yet another Microsoft challenge to overcome. Why they couldn't make things simple I would never understand. The rule any designer of anything mechanical or electrical should always be to assume that the person using the device had no clue whatsoever and its use should be intuitive, i.e. it should make it obvious how to use it and take the process step by step.

Next up was a challenge to synchronise my links with the desktop PC, for which I had to log in to Microsoft.

It was on fire duty again and, after cleaning the oven and putting in candles to pre-warm the flue of the log-burner, I went outside to bring in some more logs and some kindling. I thought I had run out of the latter and went out prepared to cut some but I had some left from a couple of days ago so that saved me a little time.

I had the fire going on no time and kept a watchful eye on it, stoking as necessary, while listening to a recording of today's Jazz Record Requests. Most of it was rubbish, the one saving grace being Panama, led by Freddy Randall on trumpet with Pete Hodge on trombone, Al Gay on clarinet (my favourite instrument), Syd Boatman on piano, Gerry Salisbury on bass and Buzz Green on drums, from April 1957 (my thanks to Alyn Shipton, the host, for the details on his [JRR blog](#)).

I was up until midnight preparing some updates to my web site. There were shed loads of updates outstanding, not to mention the development of version 4 which was on the back burner.

Monday, 14th November 2022

I spent most of my day in the kitchen, which was not really my domain, until it came to cleaning time.

It was the range cooker's turn for a good scrub and my morning job was to reline the four sections of the hob with aluminium foil so that it protected the cooker surface from all the spillage. It involved cutting out the parts of the foil that fitted over the burners. For three of the four sections, this was a case of cutting the correct-sized circles in the correct position using a circle-cutter and I had all the measurements written down, so it was fairly straightforward. The last section was for the large, wok burner and the cut-out was an awkward, irregular shape. For this I had a paper-card template and, having marked the cut-out in the correct location on the sheet of foil, I used a small craft knife fitted with a new blade.

Rachel had been for the weekend and returned for tea this evening. As usual, I sliced the beef and, in so doing, the tip of my left index finger as well. That bled profusely with blood on the kitchen floor and all over the sink where I washed the cut. I applied a clean handkerchief to it to dry it and then pressure to stem the bleeding. It took about 15 minutes of pressure to stop the bleeding altogether. During this time, I had tried using a plaster but that just opened up the cut again. A call of nature, requiring both hands to manipulate my catheter and having to wash my hands before and after only served to open the cut slightly once again, requiring more pressure and a clean handkerchief.

The bleeding had stopped sufficiently by the time we retired to apply a plaster to avoid any blood on the bed linen.

To add to my woes, I started with a tickly cough just before going to bed and that persisted for some time, so I sucked some cough sweets while tackling this week's Radio Times crossword in bed until my cough subsided. My guess was that it had been caused by the oven cleaning.

Tuesday, 15th November 2022

A trip to the loo during the early morning resulted in the removal of my finger plaster. The cut was sufficiently sealed such that it did not leak any fluid but it was rather sore.

We decided to give the kitchen cleaning a miss to give my finger time to heal a little and I spent the day working on my computer and looking at some of the electrical jumble from the old school that I needed to test at home.

After cutting up some logs for the fire so that they would burn more easily and preparing some kindling since our stock being exhausted, I lit the fire in the late afternoon as usual and I decided to try to resolve the Windows update problem on the Greenmount Village laptop I used for testing the computer components that came into the jumble. That resulted in downloading the latest version of Windows 10 and installing it.

Needless to say that failed, the problem being that the update thought I was installing it on a USB device. The fix for that was to edit the Registry and then start the process again.

The update was successful but took hours.

Having completed that and about to retire for the night, I checked for Windows updates. The good news was that the error I had was no longer present. The bad news was that it downloaded and proceeded to install three updates, so I had to wait for those to finish.

Wednesday, 16th November 2022

We weren't up early and instead of resuming cleaning the ovens, we went into Ramsbottom for some baking supplies and a potter round the charity shops. I found four DVDs, later discovering I already had one that wasn't on my list and a couple of CDs. Jenny bought a book and a cushion, left over from Halloween and reduced in price. We obtained our baking supplies from Plentiful.

We were back just in time for Matthew's visit. He had dropped Caroline off at the local GP's practice for a meeting and she came round afterwards. We all went to the old Bull's Head, now just plainly a Miller and Carter restaurant, for tea, which was very nice, if a trifle expensive. Matthew and Carrie left for home and we walked back to ours to watch one of the DVDs we had purchased.

I decided to print off a revised list of my DVDs and, after doing so, I checked the reprint to make sure all the hand-written entries on the old copy had been added. I found a couple of typing errors in the list and corrected them. As I approached the end of the list, I realised that the Excel 365 print had stopped a few pages short. I tried reprinting the missing pages but the print preview indicated that they were simply not there.

Since it was 1 a.m. by the time I had looked into the problem and made no progress whatsoever, I decided to pick up the pieces in the following day, sometime.

Thursday, 17th November 2022

This was going to be oven cleaning day. Except that it wasn't.

First we had to sort out the planned Christmas meal for Jenny and her two friends, Lynn and Sheila. Sheila had moved to Huddersfield some years ago and was coming to meet Lynn and Jenny over Christmas lunch. For various reasons, organising the meal was more complicated than one would have expected and took some time to resolve.

While on the Christmas theme, I ordered our organic turkey from Marks and Spencer, just for the three of us (Jenny, Rachel and me), since we had decided to have a Christmas meal with Bob and Marie and Matthew and Carrie at Owen's restaurant in Ramsbottom rather than Jenny cook for all of us.

I needed to order some spares for the ovens. The left oven needed a new door catch to replace the mechanism I cobbled together and which was holding its own for the present but I had no confidence that it would last and next week was going to be one of intensive use. One of the oven bulbs had failed and had needed replacing for some time and it took a while to track down the correct item. I had ordered one before but I couldn't find the details so I had to search the E-Spares web site ad that was somewhat ambiguous. I think I found the correct one and added it to my order for the door catch. The latter was much easier because I had ordered one before and I did find the part number for it.

I followed that frenzied activity with an update of my accounts.

We had some lunch, after which I had a quick look at my spreadsheet problem, trying to print the missing pages using an earlier version of Excel, thinking it was yet another bug in the 365 suite of applications. The result was the same. I left that problem for later.

I resumed the oven cleaning and finished that about 6:30 p.m.

I had prepared the fire ready for lighting but it was too late in the evening for that and the central heating had kicked in at 5 p.m. anyway.

Just before tea, I had another quick look at my Excel printing problem and it suddenly dawned on me that I had forgotten to check the print area was correctly defined. It should come as no surprise that it wasn't. I redefined it and, lo and behold, the print preview showed everything that needed to be printed. I set the print to produce the last couple of missing pages. My new list of DVDs was complete.

Friday, 18th November 2022

We set off grocery shopping at about 9:30 a.m.

I called at the pharmacy for my monthly supply of drugs, which Jenny went to collect while I waited in the car.

From there, it was another short hop to drop off my favourite wool sweater Eunice had kindly offered to repair for me. It was knitted using Arran wool and had frayed along the neck line. Jenny offered to take it in for me while I, again, waited in the car.

Our third call on the way to Unicorn in Chorlton was to the community centre at Brandlesholme, where we dropped off some empty egg boxes at the food bank. Jenny took care of that as well.

We braved the road works on Brandlesholme Road as we headed down to Bury and on to the M60 motorway at Prestwich. The road works were planned to take several months while new gas pipes were laid and we normally avoided them by using the road through Tottington down to Bury. Why, with the emphasis on cutting our carbon emissions, good money was being wasted on laying new gas pipes I failed to understand. Surely that money would be better invested on equipment to produce energy from renewable resources and to make this country self-reliant on energy production to meet its needs rather than being at the mercy of foreigners.

The M60 was busy but at least we kept moving and we completed our grocery shopping at Unicorn.

The A56 to Broadheath was also quite busy as we approached our turn-off to Waitrose but, again, it did not significantly delay us.

It was almost 1 p.m. by the time we arrived at Waitrose and we were somewhat peckish. We had hoped to find a gluten-free sandwich to have with our pot of tea in the café. No such luck. Celiacs could keel over and die from starvation in the store and no-one would notice.

I bought two pots of tea and we settled for the banana and Nakd bar each Jenny had brought with us as a standby.

All went well until we had finished our shopping. The card-reader at the till would not accept my debit card. The payment was registered as “Void” twice. Jenny tried her debit card, twice, with the same result. We were led to the enquiry desk where a young chap used the payment machine in an attempt to extract the payment from us there. My card worked first time. The conclusion was that there was a problem with the card reader on the till we used.

We finally made it with our groceries to the car and headed home. Again, the A56 was busy but traffic kept flowing for the most part. The M60 was, as usual, heavily utilised and slow moving for most of the way to our exit at Prestwich.

Instead of heading straight home, Jenny wanted some items from Tesco in Prestwich so we stopped off there and it was about 4:25 p.m. by the time we headed towards Bury on the A56.

This was not a good time to be on the road. The schools had turned out and it was the start of the evening rush-hour. That, coupled with the ongoing road-works in Bury, as the A56 joined the ring-road, had brought traffic almost to a standstill. It must have taken us at least 15 minutes to travel the approach to Bury, which would normally have taken no more than a couple of minutes. The traffic on the ring road was also very slow-moving and it wasn't until we reached the turn-off to Tottington that I managed to get up into fourth gear at 30 m.p.h.

We were both shattered and very hungry and thirsty by the time we arrived home at nearly 5:30 p.m. It had taken us an hour for a journey that should have taken no more than 20 minutes.

We arrived home to find that the latest edition of the village newsletter, Greenmount Voice, had been left for us to deliver to residents on our estate and the spares for the cooker had arrived.

While shopping I had received a text message from the local NHS Northern Care Alliance informing me there was a letter waiting for me to view online, so I had a look at that. My Urology appointment on the 29th December had been cancelled and I was to expect a new appointment within three weeks. What an appalling state of affairs, considering I should have been seen on 8th November.

I brought the accounts up to date and, after tea, managed to compile a list of the TV programmes for recording tomorrow. I scheduled the recordings before retiring for the evening.

Saturday, 19th November 2022

The first job of the day was to put out the washing line for Jenny to hang out some clothes to dry, since a nice day was forecast. That didn't last long. We had a rain shower as I went out to pick up all the apples that had fallen from the crab-apple tree. Jenny fetched in her washing and put it on the rack in the conservatory, where our dehumidifier is, to dry while I put on my waterproof coat and carried on. It soon stopped raining but the ground was very wet from yesterday's soaking.

With the apples in the garden waste bin, I came in and we folded up the copies of the Voice and then delivered them to our local residents.

By the time we had done all that, it was almost lunchtime.

I had downloaded Windows 11 last evening and I started that update on my laptop, leaving it running while I went to put the new catch on the oven door, having put in the new bulb before retiring last evening.

We had lunch, then, after a brief rest, it was kitchen and hall floor scrubbing time, which took me to nearly 6 p.m. and the end of a reasonably productive day.

Sunday, 20th November 2022

We went to watch Matthew in the Bury 10K run as he went by where Laurel Street in Tottington joined the Kirklees Trail. He was running with his friend John Speight, who I remember from my days at the NHS North West Data Centre in Prestwich, when John came to work for his father, David, who was our Operations Manager.

Leila, the wife of Marcus, our village webmaster, who took over the role from me a couple of years ago, passed Jenny and I said "Hello". She said Marcus was about a minute behind her as she ran past. I didn't recognise her at first and Marcus hadn't mentioned he and his

wife were running when I saw him at the Island Lodge meeting I attended recently. Marcus waved as he went past.

I took pictures of Matthew and John and also of Marcus but I didn't manage to take one of Leila.

We came home for lunch and I continued to come to terms with the latest update to my laptop – Windows 11.

After lunch, I helped Jenny with her preparations for her stall at Santa's Christmas Cracker on the coming Saturday.

Monday, 21st November 2022

I had planned on cutting some wood but I was ordered to undertake some household tasks while Jenny paid a visit to our local GP and went to collect some hardware items for her stall at Santa's Christmas Cracker on Saturday from her friend, Gwen.

The rest of my day was taken up with doing bits and pieces to help prepare for the stall, apart from a brief excursion into the bitter cold and very wet and windy day under cover of the car port to fetch some wood for the fire, only to find I had used the last of the logs I had cut thus far. Tomorrow was definitely going to be a wood-cutting day.

Tuesday, 22nd November 2022

It was finally wood-cutting day. I tackled some small pieces to get into the swing of things, helped along by a Louis Armstrong CD followed by a double-CD of Hoagy Carmichael and a reasonably sunny morning. I then tackled a rather large tree stump and that was hard going.

My new batch of catheters arrived while I was sawing away, much to the surprise of the DPD delivery chap.

I left off for lunch at about 1:15 until 2 p.m. and resumed work for a couple of hours or so.

I cleaned up at about 4 p.m. The light was fading and I needed a shower before settling down to watch the evening quiz shows and the news. We had enough wood for the living-room fire for two or three evenings. I obviously needed to cut more wood but that was unlikely to be this week.

Wednesday, 23rd November 2022

The main task this morning was to prepare for the Dementia Awareness Session this afternoon, making sure that Joani's laptop was still working alright with the mouse and the slide control unit. Unfortunately, forgetting the password to Joani's Windows 10 account prevented me carrying out all the checks I would have liked.

Just before Joani collected me at 12:15 p.m., I went round to the village pharmacy and convenience store for a new supply of my Statin tablets and next week's Radio Times.

The presentation went very well indeed with a lot of participation from all present.

I was home for about 4:30 p.m. and resolved a minor glitch with Joani's laptop that did not seriously affect the presentation.

Thursday, 24th November 2022

I struggled to drag myself out of bed this morning, still feeling tired and very poorly with aches and pains just about everywhere.

After the usual start to my day of ablutions, breakfast, pot washing and medication, I went out to investigate the water leak that had given rise to low water pressure. The service provider, United Utilities, knew about the leak and it was "being investigated", whatever that meant. There was no sign of any United Utilities vehicle or personnel in the vicinity of the leak, which was in exactly the same place as the last leak we had not so long ago and the one before that. In fact, we had experienced quite a few leaks on the estate and that prompted me to send an e-mail to the United Utilities CEO, Steve Mogford.

I dealt with a few E-mails, had lunch and then went round to the Cuppa and a Chat session at the old school to collect my sweater from Eunice. She had repaired it for me. Jenny had sent her a box of chocolates.

I chatted with one or two people there and came home because I was expecting a call from my GP.

We talked about making the booking for a Christmas meal at Owens rather than Jenny cook a dinner for seven on Christmas Day.

My GP called and informed me that they were not allowed to recommend a particular surgeon or consultant to me for private treatment and that my best approach was to contact one of the local private hospitals. I said I would first write to my NHS consultant directly.

United Utilities did fix the leak but the fix didn't last and I had to report it again in the early hours of the following morning.

Friday, 25th November 2022

I had arranged to help put up the village Christmas trees, mounted on the front of the local shops and businesses and I headed off to the old school to meet up with the others at 9:30. Tracey, who always did this and Tony, a new volunteer, had already started and I joined them outside the shops on Holcombe Road. I helped ferry the trees from the old school yard, where Alistair and Joan were preparing them for use, wrapping the lighting sets round them and so on. Tony went up the ladder to fix the trees in place while I helped foot the ladder and Tracey and I plugged them in inside the various premises. The Miller and Carter restaurant was the only problem in that the brackets holding the trees needed some

modification. We decided to leave that until later and undertook some minor maintenance, requiring two screws to be replaced in one of the brackets.

The wire to the plug of one of the sets of lights for the old school broke off as I was about to plug it in and they had to be replaced by a spare set. I said I would try to repair the lights for next year. The connector was one of those sealed types that plugged into a 13 amp plug with a built-in voltage regulator and it was a question of whether I could obtain a suitable connector with a removable cover to which I could solder the wires.

After lunch at home, we went into Ramsbottom for some groceries and a tour of the charity shops. We didn't find everything we wanted in the grocery line. Jenny bought a book and I bought a DVD and a CD in the charity shops.

We also booked Owens restaurant for our family Christmas meal instead of Jenny hosting everyone on Christmas Day.

Saturday, 26th November 2022

United Utilities had said the water leak had been fixed for a second time. Rachel informed me at just after 2 a.m. that water was gushing down the road again. I telephoned United Utilities for a third time in the wee small hours.

We went to the old school to have a look round at Santa's Christmas Cracker, Jenny and Rachel having cancelled their NGCI food stall after three set-backs (a faulty oven, dropping the chocolate cake on the floor and the water leak).

We stopped off at the church first, to look at the stalls there before walking across the road to the old school. I took pictures for the village web site as usual.

We came home for lunch and I started to prepare the photos for the village web site. That process was interrupted by Jenny requesting my assistance to help clean the shower unit. That done, I showered and changed for our evening meal at Owen's restaurant in Ramsbottom. We had a very nice meal to round off our day.

Sunday, 27th November 2022

Most of the day was taken up with tidying and commencing cleaning the lounge in readiness for our Christmas tree.

Monday, 28th November 2022

The plan was to continue cleaning and tidying the lounge.

I had written a letter to my consultant basically indicating I was not happy with the delays in my treatment and that I wanted, reluctantly, to discuss the financial implications of consulting someone privately. Having dated it for today, I suggested we strolled up to the post office at Holcombe Brook for a stamp and post it there, anticipating a collection around 1 p.m.

When we arrived at the post office around noon, it was closed and the notice on the door said someone would be back at 1:15 p.m. I also saw that the collection time on the post box was now 5:30 p.m., not that it mattered, particularly since we did not have a stamp.

We walked up to the Co-operative store at Holcombe Brook to see if they sold stamps. They did but they only sold books of second class stamps and I wanted a first class stamp.

We walked back to the Co-operative store at Vernon Road, on our way home and tried there with the same result.

We gave up and came home, rather than walk back up to the pos office and wait for the remaining 15 minutes or so to see if anyone actually turned up.

Jenny prepared lunch at home while I decided to telephone the hospital booking team. I managed to obtain an appointment with my consultant at 9:15 on 12th January 2023. I decided to discuss my options for treatment with him then.

We had lunch and by the time we had settled down after that, it wasn't worth starting in the lounge. I did do a bit of tidying up, including my desk in the conservatory that was piled with all sorts of items that had been dumped there.

After tea, we watched some recorded TV programmes as usual and I decided it was time I tidied up all the programmes we had watched recently, since I had not done so for a couple of weeks or so.

We'd had the heating on over the weekend, since Rachel was here and Jenny suggested we reverted to using the wood burner, so I switched off the central heating, fetched in some wood and lit the fire.

Tuesday 29th November 2022

I put the heating back on at 5 a.m. so that the house would warm up a bit as we eventually crawled out of bed, which made the bathroom just about bearable.

The heating kept creeping on and off during the day as the temperature in the lounge dropped below 17°C, which was not surprising as I kept opening the windows during our cleaning process.

We had a short break for lunch and decided we'd had enough by 5 p.m. The cleaning was going well but it was slow going. We still had a good day's work to do. Fortunately we had Thursday on which to do it.

Wednesday, 30th November 2022

I didn't rise early and it was a cold morning even with the heating on. After trimming my hair and beard, showering, late breakfast and pot washing, I was just about ready for Joani when she called to collect me for the Dementia Awareness presentation in Tottington.

The presentation went well and I was home for about 3 p.m. Unfortunately, I had forgotten to take my keys with me and I had to walk round to the hair salon where Jenny was having her hair done to borrow her keys.

The heating had come on in the house during the day again because it was so cold outside.

I went through my E-mails, one of which was a final reminder that my TV licence ran out today, so I renewed it, having already accounted for it.