

Greenmount – October 2007

The new patio doors were installed in place of the windows at the back of the kitchen and the garage on the 3rd and 4th respectively. There is much more natural light in the kitchen, now and we can, at last, see just how much of a tip it is. The garage is also much warmer and brighter – when the sun shines.

The new doors also give the impression of a larger kitchen and it is very useful for Jenny not having to push past me at my desk when she wants to go outside to the back to hang out the washing. It is also useful for me not to have water dripping down my neck.

The rear access to the garage means I can work on the garden without the need to open the garage door and I no longer have to worry about the passing thief helping him- or herself to my tools while I am occupied elsewhere, as happened to a neighbour up the road a couple of years ago.

Having three sets of patio doors at the back gives us considerable flexibility. As one door closes, another one opens.

We collected the new design for the kitchen from B&Q on the 1st, having spent at least half an hour with the designer in store moving things around. The designer, Barry, did not seem best pleased about having to make the changes.

On the 5th, it was the turn of Paul Davis in Bolton, who fitted the kitchen for Carrie's (Matthew's intended) parents, to have a go and their designer, Martin, took a lot of time (2½ hours) and trouble to display and explain various options on the computer design before we agreed an outline plan and an outline price.

Guess who eventually received our order!

Unfortunately, the late finish in Bolton and being greeted by the welcoming words from Rachel "Treacle has had a bird and thrown up all over the door mat" meant there was no chance of being in Wigan for 6:30 to join Wills for his 'lads night out'. Rachel had cleaned up the mess, just managing not to replicate the cat's involuntary muscle spasm of the oesophagus, using an anti-bacterial cleaner and Jenny thoroughly washed the mat again using an E-coli and MRSA disinfectant. As a result, we didn't finish tea until nearly 9 pm but at least we're all reasonably healthy.

Sunday 6th gave me little chance to continue the wiring work in the garage, in preparation for the new kitchen, since we visited relatives in Sheffield. They found me enough work to do to compensate me for my loss.

Jenny's brother, Wilf and his wife, Anne came to stay from the 13th to the 16th. We fetched them late on the Saturday evening, later than intended due to a traffic jam on the M60, which was closed due to an incident. We learned later from sources close to the constabulary that three children had been playing chicken with the motorway traffic and at least one had become a scrambled egg. The official news bulletin is that two boys, aged six and seven, had strayed onto the motorway in the dark, through broken or vandalised fencing, carrying their

scooters and they had been hit by oncoming traffic. I caught elements of a report stating the father of one of the boys was reported to be devastated but made no mention of why his young child was wandering about in the dark, unsupervised.

The plan was to return to Sheffield after lunch on the following Tuesday but Anne and Wilf decided to stay for tea so it was another late night.

We managed a trip out to Bygone Times on the Monday afternoon and we found some more M&S Harvest stoneware pottery to enhance our collection, of which we now have twelve place settings, except for two medium-sized plates, which we hope to acquire at some later date. Since the dinner table only seats eight, we obviously need a bigger house.

Jenny and Wilf attended yet another car boot sale and takings were, once again, quite good. As more people hear of our enterprise, they give us their unwanted bits and pieces (hint) so our stocks are replenished more or less on a weekly basis and the amount of room in the garage diminishes in direct proportion.

Our Dyson washer has stopped three times with a warning that it is not emptying and on each occasion I have had to drain it manually and clean out the coin trap filter. This is quite an easy process; it just takes time and can be a bit on the damp side if one is not careful. At least this resolved the problem and it now seems to have settled down again. Perhaps it didn't like being moved.

I am still in the process of rewiring in the garage. This has involved removing part of the loft flooring, which was easier said than done, thanks to the snug-fit design when Matthew helped me lay it. I have also discovered the ceiling is impersonating Mr Floppy at the rear wall, probably because Matthew talked me out of fixing a supporting baton to the wall to which I could have nailed it at the time of installation. One lives and learns, I suppose. So I am going to install one retrospectively, which is also easier said than done.

Meanwhile, back in the kitchen, I have removed all of the floor-standing units that were under the breakfast bar, the breakfast bar itself and the radiator that was underneath it. Unfortunately, the radiator valve had a touch of incontinence and refused to stop dribbling. The only way of fixing it was to crimp the pipes feeding it using a pair of mole grips and, when all else failed, a hammer. Fortunately, since the pipes will not be required again, this inflicted defect matters not. Note that this technique should not be applied to any similar human condition.

I have removed all of the old wall tiles, except for a few remaining behind the cooker hood and the walls are now a complete mess. I have finally managed to contact my plasterer and he is coming to have a good laugh on 4th November, with the intention of making my handiwork good the following week end.

We have chosen the new floor tiles and we have a guy booked to lay them week commencing 5th November.

All this planning was becoming quite a chore, so I have devised a project plan, using Microsoft Excel, since I don't have a copy of Microsoft Project. This has thrown up some

critical activities like ordering the floor tiles and choosing a new fridge/freezer to replace the existing separate units.

The kitchen designer was pushing the Liebherr range of fridge/freezers. These are German designed and manufactured in Germany. You can immediately tell this from the price, at around £1500 for the model I selected and Jenny rapidly deselected. We have ordered a Bosch, which is also German designed but manufactured in Turkey. It is about one third of the cost of the Liebherr.

On the job front, Jenny has had her medical for the School Crossing Patrol service. She was planning to withdraw her application but the lady who manages the service persuaded her not to do so. She quite enjoys being out in the fresh air and likes working with children. Since she is already a lunchtime supervisor, she is tied to school days anyway. She does not intend to undertake full-time work, though and will probably end up as a relief for unavailable permanent staff.

My camera is still having shutter trouble and Jenny has finally suggested I buy a new one so I am going to have another look at Canon digital cameras, with a view to purchasing a semi-professional kit. I shall probably have the EOS 600 looked at to see if it can be fixed at a realistic price as well. It is a damn good camera and takes some really good quality pictures when the shutter decides to open properly.

This last week or so of October I have spent removing the old kitchen floor tiles. The ones in the extension were ceramic tiles and the rest of the floor in the kitchen and entrance hall were Parkiflex wood tiles.

Rachel finished her contract appointment as a Witness Care Officer for Greater Manchester Police at Tameside Police Station at the end of the month and is looking for another 'filler' position while she completes her master's degree. She has had an interview at Stockport Police Station but they released her without charge. She has an assessment at Police HQ quite soon. She has also applied for a position in Newcastle (why aye) and I think we have talked her out of trying to join The Met.

It has been said that as one grows older one receives more and more invitations to certain kinds of events and on Sunday 28th, we were invited to a birthday party for Carrie's 90 year-old grandmother, who, I am pleased to say, is still going strong and most independent. Carrie's folks laid on a very nice buffet and plied me with organic ale. Fortunately (more so on the return journey), Carrie was kind enough to give us a lift.

We both went round to the Old School to help prepare for the jumble sale on Monday 29th October. I help to check out the electrical equipment. The sale raised almost £2k, well above last year's takings. It all helps to run the building as the village community centre.

And finally, we had about half a dozen Trick or Treat callers on Halloween. Rachel made a lantern from a pumpkin and this was burning in the lounge window, attracting the little horrors. Most of them know Jenny through her lunch-time supervisory role at the local County Primary School and they were all so polite, it was a pleasure to treat them to a bowl of sweets from which they could take their pick.