

**Greenmount
October 2021**

Friday, 1st October 2021

Rachel had arrived the previous evening and stayed overnight, so we didn't set off grocery shopping until after 9 a.m.

Our journey took us to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park, where there was no sign of long, angry, traffic queues at the store's fuel station that seemed to be in the media headlines lately. Still, I supposed the media moguls had to generate their huge profits somehow.

We called at Dennis Gore's Chemist shop for Jenny's sea buckthorn capsules on the way round to Tesco at Prestwich. They had shot up in price.

I listened to Jazz in the car while Jenny completed her shopping at Tesco and we came home for lunch.

My afternoon was one of finishing off listing the TV recordings for the coming week and scheduling them, followed by backing up some of my data.

Saturday, 2nd October 2021

We went to the old school to help with the table-top sale and sold some electrical items. Jenny dealt with the sales while I continued to test and price newly donated items.

We came home for lunch and my afternoon was spent with more administrative work and finishing off backing up my files.

One of the letters I had received was an invoice for the fencing work, which made no allowance for the fence panel that was in excess to requirements and which the installer took back to Cocklestorm, along with a couple of fence posts and possibly a base panel. Colin, the installer, said that he would speak to someone in the office about a refund for the unused panel, which was quite expensive.

Rachel arrived for the weekend just before 5 p.m.

Sunday, 3rd October 2021

It was not a very productive day, particularly since we didn't finish breakfast much before noon. It was a cooked breakfast, though.

I spent some time looking at options for covering the food if and when Jenny and Rachel had their stall selling gluten-free items at Santa's Christmas Cracker. The need for extra precautions was due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it was looking expensive.

I also dealt with another wad of e-mails, including requesting a credit for the fence panel that was surplus to requirements after completing the recent installation.

I finally managed to clean the fire after several recent days of use, together with the hearth, which was filthy.

That gave me an opportunity to listen to Jazz Record Requests, which, apart from the first track with Kenny Ball and his band playing High Society, was even more of a cacophonous load of rubbish than usual. There was one track called "Rufus" with Archie Shepp sounding like he was trying to play the tenor saxophone for the first time, with no clue whatsoever. I just couldn't believe that somebody had actually requested the track, or if they had, it was a challenge to detect how low the BBC could sink. The Mariana Trench wasn't deep enough.

Monday, 4th October 2021

After a very restless night, I managed to crawl out of bed in good time to see Rachel off to work. Jenny was also tired, as I had woken her in the night, moaning in my sleep and she had a bit of a rest after we had finished the dishes from our evening meal yesterday.

We had intended walking into Ramsbottom and catching the bus back but the weather forecast had changed from yesterday and heavy rain showers were now predicted as probable for most of the day, so we took the car. We eventually managed to find a parking space up by the Civic Hall.

The tour of the charity shops was a bit of a waste of time for me. Jenny bought a book and a mug.

The card shop, which was normally very good, had nothing appropriate for my cousin, Ann, whose birthday was coming up, as was her and Trevor's wedding anniversary. Much of the limited display in the small shop had been taken over by Christmas cards.

The supply of organic caster sugar in the dispenser at Plentiful was low and Jenny bought what she could scrape out of it, which would suffice for a short while.

We called at Morrison's small supermarket for some dinner candles. They had shot up from £2 to £2.95, so we gave those a miss.

It wasn't a particularly successful outing so we decided to cheer ourselves up with lunch at Owen's and we both had a gluten-free Cesar Chicken Salad, which was very nice.

Before we had left home, I had found a stainless-steel padlock at Toolstation and the local one near Matthew's house had one in stock so I had asked Matthew to buy one for me and I would collect it the next time I was passing, which he had done, so I reimbursed him for the cost, updating and checking my accounts at the same time.

I had received a credit from Cocklestorm for the returned fence panel and I telephoned to make the payment for the balance due. The lady to whom I needed to speak was unavailable and I left a message for her to call me back.

Tuesday, 5th October 2021

We had a late start. I spent most of the day doing administrative work, including paying Cocklestorm for the fencing.

I had intended to start cleaning in the kitchen, which involved replacing some sealant around the sink area but Jenny wanted to tackle some ironing and didn't want me in the kitchen.

I worked on a design for a makeshift food cover for Jenny's gluten-free stall at the old school's Christmas sale, Santa's Christmas Cracker.

Wednesday, 6th October 2021

We went to Bolton. Jenny and Rachel, who joined us for the day, wanted to go to the Dunelm store and to the Hobbycraft store. I said we might as well look at the materials I needed for the food stall cover in B&Q, which was in the same retail park area as the other stores.

We all looked in B&Q and decided to use Lightglaze Clear sheets for the back, top and sides with a 18mm x 34mm wooden frame. The overall dimensions of the cover would be 1800mm x 670mm x 600mm high and would sit on one of the long, collapsible tables at the old school. All I had to do was to buy the bits and construct it over the next week or two. I decided to run the design past Matthew first.

I sat in the car listening to a Jazz CD while Jenny and Rachel went into the other two stores.

Returning home, I helped Rachel design a sign for the door of her office using Powerpoint.

I suggested she printed it on my Canon i990 printer, which was connected to my desktop, rather than the wireless MG2900, since the latter imposed larger margins. Unfortunately, the i990 was not installed on her computer and doing so proved something of a challenge. It took me some time to resolve the problems. Meanwhile Rachel used the MG2900, trimmed the paper to produce symmetrical margins and then laminated the sign.

Thursday, 7th October 2021

I went round to the village convenience store for next week's Radio Times and listed most of the programme recordings for next week.

Friday, 8th October 2021

Grocery shopping took us to Unicorn in Chorlton and to Waitrose in Broadheath.

After lunch, I finished off the programme listings and scheduled the recordings.

Saturday, 9th October 2021

We had a morning of dealing with electrical jumble at the old school. There wasn't a lot Jenny could do so she went to help sort the clothing that had been donated.

After lunch, I tidied up the recorded programmes we had watched during the previous week and backed up my media.

I had my Covid-19 booster vaccination at 5:25 p.m. and, for good measure, my annual 'flu vaccination at the same time, at the Civic Centre in Ramsbottom. I have to say that it all went like clockwork. It was extremely well organised.

Sunday, 10th October 2021

I worked in the garden all day, cutting the grass, trimming the edges and sweeping the patio and side passage block paving, pulling out the weeds as I went. I couldn't tackle the moss though.

After I had finished, I thoroughly cleaned the lawn mower and the strimmer. The latter was caked in mud, some of which had been there a while so it took ages to remove it.

Monday, 11th October 2021

The first job of the day was to send the design for the food enclosure for Jenny and Rachel's stall at Santa's Christmas Cracker to Matthew for his comments.

The first job after breakfast was to wash the car. It was very dirty. Apart from the rust on the nearside, front wing, which was awaiting replacement, there was a spot of rust on the underside of the hatch, around one of the drain holes at the bottom. I wasn't sure what to do about that.

After lunch and a half-hour or so rest, I went outside with the intention of polishing the car but time was getting on and, with the sun setting early these days, I parked the car back under the car port, turning my attention to fixing the new gate.

The curved top of the gate had started to lift on the hinged side and needed securing. I removed the two nails that had pulled out of the wood under the curved top and replaced them with a stainless-steel screw. The screw thread went into a joint between two pieces of wood underneath, held together with nails and the screw had pulled them apart slightly. I removed the screw from the curved top-piece and put in a horizontal screw to pull the two pieces of wood together before putting it back in again. I didn't have a stainless-steel screw of the correct size for this so I use a zinc-plated one.

I decided to pack up. As I did so, I noticed the curved top-piece was starting to lift on the opposite side. I decided to leave that for the present. Having put everything away, I came in for a cup of tea and to relax for the evening.

Tuesday, 12th October 2021

We spent most of the day in Bury. Having travelled down by bus, for which we had the ten minute walk down to Longsight Road, we went to the music shop to buy some reeds for Rachel's clarinet. The shop had closed down.

Heading into the Millgate shopping centre, Jenny first visited Poundland, from which she came out empty handed.

We walked down to the large card shop where I found a birthday card for my cousin, Ann and an anniversary card for her and her husband, Trevor.

We made our way to Marks and Spencer for a pair of cotton pyjamas for me and then to Wilkinson's where Jenny looked at the kitchenware. She found nothing she wanted. She did pick up a bottle of acetone nail-varnish remover on the way out.

On the way back towards the bus station, we called in at the Cat's Protection League charity shop to see if there was anything of interest. There wasn't.

We then called at Rymans stationery shop where I bought a 500-sheet pack of Xerox 120gsm paper for my two printers. That was quite expensive at just over 4p per sheet.

Had we found anywhere that served a decent gluten-free lunch, we would have had a nice lunch out. Instead we headed for our bus home.

There was a 474 bus at the stop but I suggested we checked out the 480, which would have brought us within a couple of minutes of home. They only ran every hour and the next one was due in half an hour. We decided to go for the 474, which dropped us off ten minutes from home. The bus left as we approached it and the next one was in about 15 minutes.

A 472 pulled in a few minutes later and we decided to take that, which stopped more or less at the same place as the 474, the difference being that the route was less direct and therefore took longer, not that it mattered.

Safely home, we had a rather early evening (more late afternoon) meal in lieu of missing lunch.

Wednesday, 13th October 2021

We started our autumn cleaning as part of the run-up to Christmas by tackling the dining room. I couldn't believe how long it took to clean and polish the display cabinet and the ornaments (aka dust-collectors) that adorned it. We managed to finish that, the curtain rail, the old wall-clock and the glass in the patio door. The uPVC door frame looked clean enough and we left the table, chairs and wooden floor until tomorrow.

I started to work through the TV listings for the coming week.

Thursday, 14th October 2021

We didn't rise early and we didn't get round to finishing the dining room.

I wrote a letter to include in Ann (my cousin) and Trevor's anniversary card and prepared that and Ann's birthday card for posting. I spent some time working out from where to acquire the organic, gluten-free ingredients Jenny and Rachel needed for their produce for the stall at the Christmas fair. After that, I continued to list the TV recordings for the coming week.

Friday, 15th October 2021

It was grocery shopping day and we went to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park and Tesco at Prestwich. There was a lack of organic, soft fruit and we only managed to find one box of organic blueberries. Normally we would purchase four, since they were good for the eyes and a couple of boxes of organic raspberries. We did manage to buy the organic sultanas and organic raisins Jenny needed but there were no organic currants.

If you wonder why we bought organic produce as far as possible, it is very simple to explain.

1. Food grown organically does not rely on the routine use of herbicides and pesticides and is grown using only organic compost. The food does not contain traces of any harmful chemicals.
2. Organically grown food is better for the environment. It encourages a wider diversity of wildlife instead of killing it off with poisons. Some of this wildlife is essential for fruiting through pollination. Killing it off reduces yield and, in the longer-term, crop failure.
3. Animal welfare is far better with organic farming. Animals have freedom to roam and have a much better, natural diet instead of food full of chemicals, traces of which find their way into the meat of non-organically-fed animals and, ultimately, into you.
4. I believed organic food tasted better and, at the end of the day, you are what you eat. And what you are, you pass on to your children.

Here endeth today's lecture.

After lunch I finished off the TV listings and then programmed all the recordings.

Saturday, 16th October 2021

We went to the old school to work on the electrical jumble, although there wasn't much for Jenny to do. We came back home for lunch at about 2 p.m.

After lunch, we discussed the requirements for Santa's Christmas Cracker and I checked where I could obtain the baking ingredients Jenny wanted. The best place for the golden syrup was Amazon and I asked Matthew to order that for me since he had a Prime account. The intention was to collect it tomorrow on our way to or from the Trafford Centre.

I started tidying up the TV recordings we had watched during the past week, leaving off to go to bed.

Sunday, 17th October 2021

The plan was to go to the Trafford Centre to look for baking items Rachel and Jenny wanted in order to prepare for Santa's Christmas Cracker in December. We didn't make it.

I woke up feeling dizzy and sick. I eventually managed to rise to my feet and I made it into the shower without falling over or throwing up. That didn't last long.

After I dressed, I came downstairs, grabbed a tonic water and sat in my chair feeling terrible. Jenny provided me with a bucket and I subsequently used it. As it turned out I was sick only once and, with a migraine patch on my forehead, a damp flannel on my head and a blanket round my legs I eventually fell asleep.

When I awoke, the dizziness had gone but I was as white as a sheet and still felt sick. I improved slowly and managed to eat two slices of toast with jam on it and drink a cup of tea.

I managed to finish tidying up the programmes we had watched and back up my media despite still feeling under the weather.

I also lent a hand with the Halloween decorations Rachel and Jenny were putting up.

Monday, 18th October 2021

I prepared for the village AGM and the village committee meeting which followed on from the AGM.

I did a little tidying in the conservatory, throwing out some items I was thinking of repairing and for which I decided there was no hope of finding spare parts. Manufacturers certainly didn't make it easy to repair some items.

I designed and printed some basic, business-like cards with my e-mail address on them, also advertising our web page of items for sale.

I went to the meetings in the old school at 7:30 p.m., which took the best part of 2½ hours. It was nice to see everyone again after such a long time.

Tuesday, 19th October 2021

We did some more planning work for Santa's Christmas Cracker, essentially working out from where to obtain the baking items Jenny and Rachel needed, completing the booking form and writing the cheque to pay for the table in the old school hall.

Jenny also reached the target of fifteen people required to restart the line-dancing sessions and she organised that for 19th November. It was now a case of contacting all the people on the list to let them know.

The rain stopped and I went outside to transfer all the rest of the garden rubbish from the trailer into the garden waste bin. I was then able to put electrical jumble that was beyond repair and which was occupying my car boot from Saturday, in the trailer.

I also put the freezer door that was damaged and replaced on the new Miele fridge-freezer into the trailer for disposal. It had been hanging around on the drive awaiting collection by Miele's courier for weeks and they hadn't bothered to turn up.

The trailer was now full of rubbish for the tip.

I came in for a brief rest because I was feeling a little rough and then went back out before lunch to read the meters and put the garden waste bin back where it belonged.

After lunch, I submitted the meter readings and awaited the billing for gas, electricity and water for the past month.

Wednesday, 20th October 2021

It was a day of a bit of this and a bit of that, with nothing particularly constructive, just routine jobs.

Thursday, 21st October 2021

My new Dell laptop arrived early in the day, which meant we could go into Ramsbottom for a potter round the charity shops and take in some fresh air even though it was raining when we set off, suitably waterproofed.

I found four CDs for £1 in one of the charity shops and Jenny found a couple of books.

We called at Plentiful for a couple of items as well. Jenny also nipped into Clarks for some paints for Rachel but couldn't decide what she wanted so she left it to Rachel to look for herself the next time she came.

I spent the afternoon unpacking my laptop and setting it up. Jenny fetched me a copy of next week's Radio Times from the village convenience store and I started looking at the listings for the coming week.

Friday, 22nd October 2021

We set off grocery shopping to Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath later than planned. Traffic was heavy on the M60 but it kept moving on the way out. The same could not be said for the return journey.

We had lunch in the café at Waitrose before shopping there.

On returning, I continued with the new laptop configuration, putting on the applications I used, which wasn't easy for various reasons.

In the evening, I finished scanning the TV listings for next week, listing the recordings and I programmed the recordings for the following day.

Saturday, 23rd October 2021

It was a busy day.

We were up early for a change and I used Windows Media Centre on the desktop computer to search the EPG for programmes of special interest, making sure I had not missed any thumbing through the Radio Times.

That completed, we went to the old school to deal with more electrical jumble and returned home for lunch around midday.

I was programming the recordings for the rest of the week when Matthew and Carrie arrived for a visit.

I finished off my task after they had left, washed the dishes from last evening and this morning and edited a load of recordings from the past day or so to remove the advertisements as well as topping and tailing them, ready for viewing.

I was going to continue setting up the new laptop but Jenny wanted a banner for the line-dancing session to hang on the railings outside the old school so I started work on that, with help from Jenny.

Afterwards, I sorted out a problem with a software installation on the new laptop and then updated this blog.

Sunday, 24th October 2021

I placed an order to Healthy Supplies for some items Jenny needed for her baking for Santa's Christmas Cracker.

I helped Jenny with cleaning our bedroom. I spent a lot of time cleaning the window, frame and all and I helped with the dressing table, which we moved to clean behind and underneath it.

Monday, 25th October 2021

We had arranged to see our friend Robin, who had agreed to build a cover for Jenny's stall at the Christmas Cracker after I had decided it was too much of a challenge for me. Robin had some other urgent business that needed his attention so he called to postpone our meeting until Thursday afternoon.

I helped Jenny design the banner for her line-dancing class and we went into Ramsbottom to purchase some permanent markers for it.

I had a late night installing software on the new laptop.

Tuesday, 26th October 2021

I resumed work on the banner for Jenny. I managed to squeeze in some time to continue installing software on the new laptop and ironing out a few problems.

Wednesday, 27th October 2021

I finished off the preparation of the new laptop, or so I thought and replaced the old one with the new one. This attracted the gremlins.

First, the new hub for the laptop wouldn't power on and it was essential to provide all the connectivity I needed. After a bit of fiddling about, I managed to get it up and running but I didn't know what I had done (a) to stop it powering on and (b) to revive it.

Second, the old USB hub I used for connecting various portable hard drives wouldn't power on. I gave up on that for the present.

Third, Microsoft Excel on the new laptop wouldn't load my file that contained all the details about TV recordings as well as a list of my DVDs. I tried everything I could think of but it didn't work. Having configured the software to load spreadsheets containing macros, I tried loading an old copy of the file. That worked!

I tried loading the original file on my old laptop and it worked fine, so I saved a copy of it and also saved it to itself, hoping that would resolve the problem.

The new laptop still wouldn't load the original file but it did load the copy, so I deleted the original and saved the copy to the original filename. That solved my problem, whatever it was.

It was then time to finish the banner for Jenny and I completed the outline of the lettering in pencil. The plan was for Rachel, who would be coming tomorrow, to ink in the characters for us. She was very artistic and much better at that sort of thing than either of us.

I ran a test TV recording using NextPVR on the new laptop and it worked a treat. I scheduled a couple more, one for this evening and one for tomorrow, both of which clashed with other recordings, scheduled on the Desktop.

Thursday, 28th November 2021

I collected Rachel from Finney's Garage and brought her home. Her car had developed a rattle.

I started tidying up the TV programmes we had been watching over the past week or so and accidentally deleted a folder I wanted. Fortunately, I had a back-up copy on another disc, so I was able to restore it. That took the best part of six hours.

Meanwhile, I went round to the village convenience store for next week's Radio Times and I started looking through the listings for next week's recordings.

We went to see our friend, Robin, about the design of a cover for Jenny's cake stall at the Christmas Cracker sale. Having asked Robin for his help in constructing the cover, we went down to discuss the design.

I took Jenny and Rachel into Ramsbottom for some coloured pens with which to colour the letters on the line-dancing banner I had designed for Jenny to advertise the sessions at the old school.

Returning home, I finished off the folder recovery while Rachel commenced colouring in the banner letters. Unfortunately, she ran out of ink before the banner was complete.

Friday, 29th October 2021

I was up at 6:20 a.m. and we were at Sainsbury's in Heaton Park for about 8:45 a.m. We called at Tesco in Prestwich for more groceries and we were home for about 11:30, which gave Jenny enough time to have a small lunch and a brief rest before heading off for her line-dancing class at the old school.

I toiled away at the desktop computer, planning the recordings for the coming week and scheduling most of them. The recordings that clashed I subsequently scheduled on the new laptop using NextPVR.

I collected Jenny from her line-dancing class and we went to B&Q at Heapbridge to buy three sheets of clear plastic for the stall cover Robin was constructing for us. We dropped those off with Robin and came home, where I finished off scheduling the TV recordings for next week.

Saturday, 30th October 2021

We had a productive morning at the old school dealing with the electrical jumble and returned home for lunch some 1½ hours later than planned.

After lunch, we ventured into Ramsbottom for another blue pen for colouring in the line-dancing banner, having used the original one we purchased earlier in the week. Unfortunately, the shop had no more of the blue pens of the same size in stock so we had to settle for a smaller one. There was not much more work to do, so we thought it would suffice.

We called at Tesco for some "Trick or Treat" goodies for the children who we expected tomorrow evening but could not find what we needed. We proceeded to Morrison's store where we purchased three bags of fun-sized treats and some candles for the dining room.

Returning home, I tidied up the TV recordings we had watched over the previous couple of weeks.

Sunday, 31 October 2021

We were grateful for our extra hour in bed, since the clocks went back an hour at 2 a.m. for the end of daylight saving time, traditionally known as British Summer Time or BST.

The first job of the day was to reset the clocks.

The second job of the day was to finish off the line-dancing banner and then Rachel and Jenny went across to the old school to fix it to the railings.

I fetched the picture-wire from the garage so that Rachel could hang her illuminated pumpkin in the front window and set about finding something on which to place the pot Halloween ornaments in the lounge window so that they could be seen once the tealights were inserted. I also switched on our sign wishing everyone “A Scary Halloween”.

Rachel wanted a stencil for carving her pumpkin and I helped her find one on the internet and I printed it out for her. I also started her off with marking out the pumpkin so she could cut off the top evenly.

Jenny wanted another diet sheet, more for recording what she ate rather than dieting and I tried printing one from the new Dell laptop. I discovered I had not installed the printer on the laptop and set about doing so.

The automated method found the printer but, for some reason, failed to authenticate the access to it, so I set about installing it manually. That didn’t work either.

We had about 45 trick-or-treaters despite the bad weather, attracted, no doubt, by our Halloween window decorations, courtesy of Rachel. The pumpkin she carved was, as ever, excellent.