

Greenmount October 2023

Sunday, 1st October 2023

We were at the old school from 10:45 a.m. until about 3:45 p.m. working on the electrical jumble and we came home with a boot load of rubbish for the recycling centre in Bury.

By the time I settled down with a cup of tea it was too late to listen to Jazz Record Requests, so I had to wait for the recording of the programme to finish. As it turned out, it was a total waste of time. There wasn't a single, decent, traditional jazz piece to be heard.

I went on to scan a few documents I needed to keep as part of my long-term project for going paperless, only to discover I had already scanned and saved most of them. It obviously wasn't my day.

Monday, 2nd October 2023

After lunch I finally managed to finish off the third coat of paint on the walls of the back bedroom. That was followed by cleaning up and then cleaning the sink and the toilet. What an exciting life I led, being clean round the bend.

I had spent some time earlier fruitlessly searching for an Aeon stainless steel radiator for the back bedroom. It seemed that the manufacturer, Pitacs, had stopped making the horizontal variety, so I sent them an e-mail asking why.

Prior to that, I had ordered myself some more catheters and put a reminder in my calendar for my next bowel screening kit for next October since I no longer received one automatically, every two years, an event to which I always looked forward.

I continued my search after I had finished the painting and stumbled on a supplier still selling the Aeon horizontal radiators, albeit at an exorbitant price. I made a note of the details, not being swayed by the notice that their sale ended at midnight.

Tuesday, 3rd October 2023

I started putting up the fittings (a shelf and the curtain rail) in the back bedroom after dealing with a backlog of e-mails I had ignored until now. Jenny gave me a hand with the curtain rail after lunch. I would have also reinstated the curtain tieback hooks but they needed cleaning and we had no brass cleaner.

I decided to tackle the cupboard door that was catching on the jamb and gently removed some of the jamb at the bottom with a large chisel, sanded the area to smooth it and checked the door closed alright. I now discovered it was also catching about half way up so I repeated the exercise in that area., finally sorting the problem.

I needed to prime the bare wood, undercoat it and gloss it. Since each stage would need time to dry, that was going to take another three days. I decided to tidy up and deal with that tomorrow since it was approaching tea time and I needed to take a bath after all the manual effort I put into chiselling and sanding.

Wednesday, 4th October 2023

For the past couple of days, I had scheduled overnight recordings of the Journeys series of train journeys from That's TV UK (Freesat channel 65) on the desktop. All I had managed to salvage from those recordings was a prolonged advertisement for Dormeo.

I had decided to switch the recording of the series to the laptop using NextPVR rather than the desktop, Windows 7, Windows Media Centre application. I had looked at using That's TV (Freeview channel 7) but programmes on that channel seemed to be surrounded by "windows" containing all sorts of information I didn't want to see so I tried Channel 65, with the same result as on the desktop.

My conclusion was that That's TV in all its guises was an utter pile of junk and to be completely avoided. Thankfully, most of the programmes I watched were on Talking Pictures, which was, by far, the best channel on TV for programme selection. The best channels for transmission quality were the BBC ones, but the picture quality was reduced a few years ago, presumably as a cost-saving exercise. At least there were no advertisements on the BBC and the BBC iPlayer was superb.

The most annoying aspects of all channels were the bits of superfluous graphics between programmes (as well as the advertisements, where applicable), the sliding in and out of graphics and the voice-over comments on the credits of programmes. The BBC had lowered its standards considerably by diverting announcers away from proper English and the downward trend in grammar was appalling. Ending sentences with prepositions was one of the worst offences. Add to that the increasing trend in bad language on all channels, although not so much on Talking Pictures and it gave some indication of our decline in social standards generally.

Right, back to the bedroom – in the decorating sense, worse luck.

I checked the curtain rail to make sure it was level and it did not seem to be.

I decided to put some primer on the bare wood I had exposed on the cupboard door jamb. I took the step ladders downstairs so I could use them in the garage to access the loft space, which is where I kept my spare tins of paint. Before I could put the ladders in the garage, I had to do a bit of tidying and then, with the ladders in place, I put all the items that were stacked up in the garage awaiting their place in the loft where they ought to be.

When I finally searched through my paint store, there was no wood primer to be found.

I came in and had a look at the undercoat I had bought. The tin said it was an undercoat/primer so I applied that to the bare wood on the cupboard door jamb.

I thought I might as well undercoat the bedroom door jamb while the tin was open so I removed the door and sanded the jamb. While I was doing that, Jenny called me for lunch

so I put the lid on the tin, the brush into some white spirit and had two helpings of home-made chicken and vegetable soup.

After lunch, I undercoated the door frame, which, with all the cutting-in, took me a good couple of hours. The finish, on top of the existing silver paint, wasn't brilliant and I was thinking it might need a second undercoat before glossing.

Thursday, 5th October, 2023

The painting was put on hold as we decided to explore the Marks and Spencer food hall at Ramsbottom. Since they had teamed up with Ocado and the Ocado web site had a fair amount of organic items, I thought there might be some in the store.

It was quite disappointing. There was some organic fruit and vegetables but one had to search for them as the labelling was quite small. The small shelf-space for organic blueberries, one of the items we wanted, was empty. The dedicated, gluten-free shelf-space of groceries was small too and there wasn't much of interest to us there either. I had a quick look at the wine and spirits. There was no sign of any Armagnac. It was a wasted trip, really.

We called at Ramsbottom on the way back. I suggested lunch at Owens restaurant but Jenny declined.

We toured the charity shops and then went to Plentiful, where we obtained two packs of organic blueberries and a couple of other items. It wasn't a large shop but it had a fair choice of organic fruit and vegetables as well as lots of other goodies.

We finished off at Morrisons store where six-packs of Highland Spring water was still on offer and the Whole Earth organic, gluten-free cornflakes were back on the shelf. We bought two of each as well as a few other bits and pieces from the free-from shelves.

We came home for lunch and I settled down to go through the Radio Times TV schedules for next week.

Friday, 6th October 2023

We set off early on our grocery shopping trip because Matthew was planning on calling in around 1 p.m.

The car boot was still full of rubbish from the old school electrical jumble and we stopped off at the refuse transfer station in Bury to recycle most of it.

We made good time on the motorway to and from Sainsbury's at Heaton Park and, despite not being able to scan an organic chicken to add it to our bill (for the second time in a month), resulting in a delay at the self-service check-out, we were home well before Matthew's visit. Unfortunately, he messaged us while we were on the way back to say he had forgotten he was expecting a delivery and he would have to wait in for that, so he could not come.

After lunch, I finished off the TV recordings for the coming week, dozing off for about an hour in my chair while doing so. I wasn't feeling that well.

We had contemplated going round to the old school at about 9:30 p.m. to set out our stall for tomorrow's table-top sale but we decided to go round early in the morning instead.

Saturday, 7th October 2023

We had another early start and we were at the old school for about 8 a.m. We just about finished putting out all the electrical items in time for the sale at 9 a.m.

It wasn't that busy and we didn't sell a great deal. According to reports, other stalls fared the same.

We started to pack up at about 11:15 even though the sale was not due to end until noon. We came home at about 1 p.m. for lunch.

Afterwards, I emptied the vegetable waste into the compost bin and I brought the bins that were emptied yesterday round from the front, taking a little time out to tidy up the garden on the side of the drive, removing some weeds and picking up the apples that had fallen from the tree.

I emptied the paper waste into the recycling bin and came in to tinker with a BT wireless network extender. I configured it and used it to replace the Netgear extender I had previously deployed.

My plan was to install the Netgear extender in the old school as a temporary measure until a wireless access point was installed in the hall. I could not use the BT extender in the old school because it required pairing with a BT hub 2, which I had. The old school had a much older BT broadband router.

Sunday, 8th October 2023

My main task of the morning was to give the back bedroom door jamb another layer of white undercoat. Other jobs were fitted in before and after, a major breakthrough being the creation of a network location on the laptop to access the laptop I use mainly for testing and pricing electrical and technical equipment for the old school. The problem I had when trying to do this in the past was that I was using my PIN to access the laptop instead of my password. I would never understand Microsoft's strategy of making life far more complicated than it needed to be with different options for logging in to Windows 10 but only one way of connecting remotely. Then again, there was very little profit in making life simple.

An added complication was that I had been using my PIN for so long to log into Windows 10 on the GVC laptop that I had forgotten my password and there was no way of recovering it even though I could log in using my PIN. Fortunately, the password came to me in one of those rare flashes of inspiration this morning.

After lunch, we had to clean the dining room table, the glass table-top protector and the floor following a water spillage. That wasn't in today's plan and it took a couple of hours. Still, it needed doing anyway. We left the cabinet and the chairs for another day.

Monday, 9th October 2023

We went to Bury to buy some cards for forthcoming events and a larger size of shrink-wrap to make a weatherproof repair to some Christmas lights for the old school. That was followed by a visit to Matthew and Carrie's house to view the progress with the outbuilding and to borrow a long spirit-level to re-align the curtain-rail in the back bedroom.

After lunch, I gave the back bedroom door jamb a coat of gloss paint.

Tuesday, 10th October 2023

We walked up to the post office at Holcombe Brook to post a card to Jenny's friend, Sheila, for her birthday on Thursday. It was a lovely, warm, sunny day with a clear blue sky and more like summer than autumn.

When we returned home, I repaired the wire loops round the trunk of the hawthorn tree, which we used to hold up the washing lines. One of the loops had previously broken. Fortunately, the second loop took the strain of the washing on the lines, otherwise the washing would have been all over the back garden.

We had a quick snack for a late lunch since we were having an early tea. The afternoon turned cloudy and I dealt with a couple of e-mails.

I attended a PACT meeting in Tottington after tea, by which time it had started to rain. Nice timing, I thought.

Wednesday, 11th October 2023

I cleaned the back bedroom door hinges on the side that was fitted to the door frame. They had some of the previous paint stuck to them and it needed removing before refitting the door. That refitting went well, with a little help from Jenny.

The next challenge was to level the curtain rail and I took the long spirit level Matthew had lent me upstairs. It was too short. I measured it and it was 1.8 metres. I needed one that was 2 metres long. I thought things were going rather well for a change.

I looked online for a 2m spirit level and found a good one at Toolstation at a very reasonable price but they did not have one in stock, so I couldn't just nip down to buy one. I gave up and sat down for lunch.

After lunch, I decided to look for a piece of wood that was long enough and level enough to span the curtain rail mountings so that I could put Matthew's spirit level on top of it, in the middle. I couldn't find one suitable in the garage loft.

Then, I thought if I dismantled the curtain rail and used the pole to span the mountings, I could rest the spirit level on that. I removed the curtain rail, tightened up the mountings so that they were firmly fixed against the wall and gave it a try. After all that, the mountings were on the level.

I reassembled the curtain rail and checked it again with the spirit level. It was still level.

It was obviously the ceiling that was well out of true, although, having tightened the mountings, it was not quite so obvious.

I finished off in the bedroom for the day by touching up a couple of places on the coving.

My next job was to sort out the scanner, which I had tried to use after lunch, without success. I thought at the time it had given up and I needed a new one. It suddenly struck me that, having replaced the Netgear wireless extender with a BT extender, the printer/scanner had the wrong wireless network configuration and I reset it. The scanner burst into life.

What had seemed like a miserable day earlier seemed to have been more productive than I thought it was going to be.

Tomorrow, there was a small gap between the coving and the wall in the back bedroom that needed a little filler and I planned to use some flexible Polyfilla, which was white and ought to blend in.

After that, it would be a case of looking at what was required to fit a new radiator before ordering one.

Thursday, 12th October 2023

My day went more or less as planned.

Friday, 13th October 2023

There wasn't much time to do a great deal apart from the usual morning routine because we were due at The Emmanuel Centre on Longsight Road for today's D-CaFF session, this being a temporary venue due to building and refurbishment work at the Cricket Club.

We were entertained by the Greenmount Strummers and it had to be said that they were better each time I heard them.

Back home, I started tidying up the recorded TV programmes we had watched over the past couple of weeks.

Saturday, 14th October 2023

We went grocery shopping to Unicorn in Chorlton and Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park, which took most of the day.

It was mid-afternoon before we had lunch and afterwards I finished off tidying up the recorded TV programmes we had watched.

Sunday, 15th October 2023

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

There was no sign of the wireless network access point for the hall so there was still no signal in the room. I decided to try to configure the Netgear range extender as a temporary measure but when I configured it using WPS from the BT router, the PC wouldn't connect to it. When I tried to configure it manually, the PC still wouldn't connect to it. I eventually gave up and brought it home to play with again.

Monday, 16th October 2023

My morning was one of fairly routine tasks.

After lunch, we walked up to Holcombe Brook post office to send off some greetings cards.

When we returned home, we rearranged the furniture in the back bedroom so that I could have a look at the plumbing required for a new stainless-steel radiator.

I briefly helped with the preparation for our evening meal and then dealt with some administrative tasks on the laptop.

Tuesday, 17th October 2023

The morning was again one of routine tasks which were then followed by the delivery of the Greenmount Village newsletter to residents on the estate. Julie, our village chairperson, had dropped them off yesterday.

After lunch, I dealt with some e-mails, not least being one from United Utilities regarding my account. My usage of water had risen and the cost had increased correspondingly. This was the company that was recently in the news for dumping raw sewage into rivers and leakage from crumbling treatment plants into local streams while paying its executive staff high salaries and giving its ex-chief executive a handsome golden handshake as he left the company to make even more money elsewhere. Meanwhile, old water mains, some containing asbestos, continued to burst in the locality, for which shareholders were well rewarded.

I rolled back the carpet in the back bedroom and took up the flooring that gave access to the central heating pipes. I tidied up the mess under where the boards had been, left over from when they were removed for the first time to lay some electrical cables.

It was clear that, while these gave access to the point where the connections for the new radiator supply and return feeds would need to be made, there was, as yet, no access to

where the connections to the new radiator would be required. Furthermore, there was a joist running parallel to the wall and close to it that would probably obstruct the new pipes to the radiator.

I then decided to look again for a stainless steel radiator and, looking at the Aeon web site, I did discover that the radiator I wanted was still being produced, even if it was rather expensive. I did find a web site with a good reputation on Trustpilot that was selling the Aeon radiator at a lower price and I sent an e-mail enquiry to make sure it came with all the bits I needed, including valves, which I expected to be at additional cost. Delivery was two to three days so, with any luck, I could have the radiator some time next week.

The only snag was finding someone to fit it. I supposed I could have a bash at it but I would prefer a professional plumber if I could find one.

Wednesday, 18th October 2023

We went into Ramsbottom and Jenny decided to visit the library there, where she borrowed three cookery books, one of which, she later discovered, she had purchased a copy.

We toured the charity shops and I found four DVDs I wanted. We also went to Plentiful for a few items and to order a couple they did not have in stock.

We came home for lunch and I took the route home avoiding the short, rather steep incline out of Holcombe Brook on the basis I would use less fuel and I was right, averaging 50 miles to the gallon, which was far more than I managed using the usual route.

After lunch, I didn't do a great deal. My urethra was giving me some trouble and I had to revert to using the old stock of thinner catheters. I was hoping this was a transient problem, possibly some sort of infection and I decided to wait and see what tomorrow brought before raising the matter with either my GP or the Urology department at the hospital.

Thursday, 19th October 2023

Since I had received no reply from Plumbhub to my query about the Aeon radiator, I spent a lot of my day looking for another supplier and one that could also supply the brushed finish valves as well. It wasn't what I would call a productive day.

Friday, 20th October 2023

We were grocery shopping for most of the day at Sainsbury's, Heaton park and Tesco at Prestwich. For the rest of the day I was busy scanning the TV schedules for programmes to record next week. I didn't have time to finish, but it didn't matter because I was able to schedule tomorrow's recordings.

Saturday, 21st October 2023

We spent the day cleaning the dining room, or, to be more precise, most of it. There were still a few items requiring attention and they would have to wait while Monday.

I managed to finish looking through the TV schedules for the week during my lunch break.

Sunday, 22nd October 2023

We spent the day dealing with the electrical jumble at the old school.

Monday, 23rd October 2023

I finished off cleaning the dining room while Jenny cleaned the stairs and then started baking.

After lunch, Jenny returned to the kitchen while I tried again to find a web site that could supply the Aeon radiator and valves I wanted for the back bedroom and didn't make a lot of progress. I ended up sending a couple of e-mail enquiries.

Tuesday, 24th October 2023

I typed up the minutes for the Civic Society Meeting last Thursday, which took a while and sent them to Christine for checking before circulating them.

I had an e-mail back from a plumbing company in Chorley regarding the radiator I required, which they could supply within three days. I left that until tomorrow and proceeded with more administrative work.

Wednesday, 25th October 2023

I finalised the arrangements for the radiator and valves. The good news was that they would be here within the next few days. The bad news was that I would have to go to the supplier in Chorley to pay for them by credit card since they were not a stock item and would have to be shipped from Aeon.

Jenny went for a walk with Gwen. I looked on Google Maps for the route to Elite Plumbing Supplies in Chorley and to Waitrose at Walton-le-Dale, which was a little further up the A6. I thought we might as well drop in since we were not far away.

I had another letter for my sister Edith from the MBA Group in London on behalf of the NHS. I contacted them using their web site to inform them of Edith's demise in New Zealand.

I obtained the contact details for the plumber our neighbours used and telephoned to arrange an appointment for a quotation for fitting the new radiator. Unfortunately, for

fitting, we were looking at week commencing 20th November. Once I had a price and accepted it, I could then arrange a date for fitting the new carpet.

I still needed to find a new glass lamp shade and fit an LED bulb. I also needed to feed in the satellite cable.

After lunch, I went out and cut the grass at the back and front. I swept up all the leaves on the drive, the front path, the side path and the patio. By the time I had finished, the garden waste bin was brimming and weighed a ton. It was too late to clean the lawn mower so I just shoved everything in the garage. It was going dark and it was cold, although I was very warm and perspiring when I finally came in so I headed straight for the bathroom and a nice warm bath before tea.

Thursday 26th October 2023

We went up to Chorley to pay for the radiator and valves. It was my intention to pay by credit card but the company preferred my debit card, which wasn't a problem.

From there we motored up the A6 to Waitrose at Walton-le-Dale. We bought a few items but there was a distinct lack of organic vegetables and organic fresh meat. I doubt we would be shopping at Waitrose again for a while.

It was my intention to return via the A6, M6 and M61, except I forgot that the M61 joined the M6 much further north so once on the M6 we headed much further west than intended and ended up coming back eastwards across country, through Wigan. Yes, we took the scenic route!

I could have taken the M65 to the M61 instead of the M6 but it wasn't signposted, so I didn't.

As I was driving home, I had a telephone call on my mobile phone from Pitacs, the company supplying my Aeon radiator and valves. Jenny took a message for me to call them back, which I did when I arrived home.

The lady wanted to confirm my delivery details and that there were no restrictions preventing an articulated lorry from using local roads. I said such lorries frequently visited the local mill (Cormar Carpets) and that seemed to be alright. What I didn't think about was access to our estate and the way people parked their cars. Also, workmen were currently installing fibre for Virgin and taking up a lot of the road for rubble.

The delivery was scheduled for Monday and it would be a kerbside delivery so I would be responsible for bringing the parcel down the driveway and into the house, which wasn't a problem because Rachel would be here to help me if no-one else could.

After a late lunch, we went round to the old school to put out our electrical jumble on our stall for Saturday's jumble sale. We managed to finish that and tidy up afterwards. The plan was to go round again tomorrow after grocery shopping and lunch to do some more testing of items that had been donated, not that we had any room to display them.

We came home for tea at about 6 p.m.

Friday, 27th November 2023

Our morning grocery shopping at Sainsbury's, Heaton Park was followed by an afternoon at Greenmount old school, preparing our electrical stall for the jumble sale tomorrow. We managed to find some time to test and display more of the equipment that had been donated.

Saturday, 28th October 2023

We arrived at the old school just after 8:30 a.m. and we were ready for the commencement of the sale at 9:00 a.m. Trading was slow and steady and we met and chatted with several regular customers.

We started to clear away the unsold items at about 11:15, when the activity had waned somewhat, dividing our wares between the items to be retained for the table-top sale next week and those to be sent on to Father Wyatt in Salford. My storage space was somewhat restricted by the need to keep the stage clear for the choir performing at the Christmas fair and not having decent storage boxes meant that the space available could not be used efficiently.

After lunch, I finished of scheduling the TV recordings for the coming week.

Mike, who lived across the road, called round to ask me when I could help him configure his new laptop, which I had offered to do some time ago and we arranged to do that on Wednesday.

Sunday, 29th October 2023

British Summertime ended this morning at 1 a.m. so I reset all the clocks that did not adjust automatically.

We started our day with a trip into Ramsbottom where there was an indoor market at the Civic Hall and there were stalls on the paved area in the centre. We looked round the stalls and toured the charity shops before collecting the organic mozzarella cheese we had ordered from Plentiful.

The visits to Aldi and to Clarks craft shop proved fruitless.

After lunch, we took a car load of electrical rubbish from the old school that had been on our drive for a few days to the waste management centre in Bury. Jenny called at Tesco for a few grocery items while I waited in the car and listened to a jazz CD. We filled the car up with diesel, which was still expensive and came home.

I tidied up the TV programmes we had watched during the past week and backed up my files as usual.

Monday, 30th October 2023

The new radiator arrived and it was well packed, on a pallet. The driver kindly left it for me in front of the garage door, bringing it down the drive on a trolley.

Jenny and I managed to free it from the pallet and manoeuvre it into the kitchen, where we eventually prised open the box in which the radiator and fittings were sealed. We took the radiator in its bubble-wrapping into the dining room.

Matthew dropped by in the late afternoon and took the radiator into the back bedroom for me.

Rachel arrived in the late evening.

Tuesday, 31st October 2023

We spent most of the day cleaning in the kitchen and managed to complete the top part above the units.

Rachel spent the day carving Frankenstein's monster's face into a pumpkin and we had a lot of Trick or Treat visitors in the evening.