

Greenmount – September 2010

Jenny was back at work on the school crossing patrol on 1<sup>st</sup> September and we're back to six o'clock starts, or, at least, she is. The local council is seeking volunteers for redundancy in order to save money and Jenny filed an application. Unfortunately, this was rejected on the grounds that it would result in a net cost to the authority and a net profit to us.

The week end of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> and the following Monday was taken up with preparation for the Jumble Sale at Greenmount Old School and the sale itself. One of the privileges of helping sort the jumble is that we have a preview of the goods and are allowed to make purchases before the public sale. As a result, we now have more jumble in our house and garage than there is at the Old School.

On 4<sup>th</sup> September, my Logitech cordless keyboard, which has been misbehaving, on occasion, for a few weeks, gave up completely. The Logitech cordless mouse has also been, like me, failing to recharge its batteries for months and I was finally forced to take decisive action. I shut down my computer, removed the offending components and replaced them with a cheap and basic Chieftec cordless mouse and keyboard Matthew had given me a year or two previously and which have been gathering dust in my desk.

There was a slight moment of panic when I reloaded my computer and the mouse and keyboard would not work. A little bit of fiddling and another reload seemed to sort out the problem, the worrying aspect being that I don't know what I did to fix it. So it's goodbye Logitech and hello Chieftec.

It was also over this week end that I learnt of the earthquake in Christchurch, NZ and contacted the family there. Thankfully, they are all fine and, while they had sustained some damage to belongings, some of which are irreplaceable, for the most part, their properties have withstood the impact.

On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>, I went to a most interesting, evening talk at The Old School on local archaeology (most appropriate for an old fossil, like me) given by Dr Mike Nevell of Time Team fame and organised by the Holcombe Moor Heritage Group. It seems this area is steeped in history not to mention toxic chemicals from dye works. Would you believe that the high rainfall here was actually beneficial in the times when factories were water-powered?

Not so on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>, when we were up at 5:30 for a car boot sale at Tottington High School, expecting it to be cloudy and warmish, according to the weather forecast from the Met Office. To be fair, they had sneaked in a change to their predictions, overnight, while we were fast asleep and an early morning check saw the picture of clouds speckled with blue spots until 1 p.m. Fortunately, the car boot was advertised as indoors if wet.

We arrived at Tottington High School about 7:15 and since it was not raining at the time and had not rained for at least half an hour, we were told the car boot sale would be

outdoors. We decided, unwisely, to risk it, having pre-booked a slot based on the Met office's fine forecast that had prevailed for most of the previous week.

There was a sunny start and trade was steady until the first shower arrived. Fortunately we had plenty of plastic sheets and most of the stock was in plastic boxes with plastic lids. The rest we moved rapidly into the car and we managed to keep it fairly dry. Unfortunately, we had to set up the stall and cover it up at frequent intervals as the showers came and went until 11:30. A very heavy and prolonged shower convinced us to pack up and go home, as did everyone else and, although we made a profit on the day, it was about half what we would have expected. On top of that, a lot of items did get quite wet and had to be dried out in the kitchen and conservatory. Very useful things, dehumidifiers, especially in this climate. Pakistan could do with a few.

We complained to the person collecting the pitch fee that the car boot sale should have been indoors because that is what was advertised if the weather was wet. The reply was that they could not have fitted everyone into the room available. So how is that our problem?

That's the last time we do a car boot sale at Tottington High School unless the forecast is for high pressure and scorching sunshine on the day and for three days either side of it. I would strongly advise everyone else to do the same and ignore any wording referring to indoor accommodation.

After a quick lunch, we were at The Old School for the village Fun Run and barbecue. Jenny was dressed as a clown. I wasn't because I thought it might be typecasting. The local primary school headmistress does face painting and offered to complete Jenny's fancy dress by giving her a clown's face. That done, she set off on the fun run to Tottington and back, only to be chased by the local Bury Times photographer. Fame at last.

Meanwhile, I potted around taking pictures and the incriminating evidence is now on the village web site ([www.greenmountvillage.org.uk](http://www.greenmountvillage.org.uk)).

On returning, Jenny took up her position on the cake stall, to which she contributed a number of home-made, organic items. They didn't stay on the stall for long.

I am pleased to say the whole day was a success, thanks largely to the efforts of the organiser, Tracey Hayhoe and drew a much bigger crowd than the concurrent event in Town Meadow at Tottington.

On 14<sup>th</sup> September, I finally hung some pictures in the conservatory, these having been lying around for some weeks and then commenced tidying up the room, so much so that you can now see the floor.

The next big event, which went largely unnoticed, was my 63<sup>rd</sup> birthday on 16<sup>th</sup> September. Thanks to those who sent me the ten cards I received. Two years and counting to my state pension.

Jenny and Rachel spent the week end of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> on the final Scout training course in the Getting Started series. Better late than never.

I should have spent the Sunday afternoon walking across Morecambe Bay in the pouring rain, to raise funds for Bury Hospice. As I was about to leave, dressed in warm, waterproof clothing and walking boots, carrying a pair of weaver shoes for walking across the sand and wading through the River Kent and a sailing bag with a change of clothing, the telephone rang. Bury Hospice had been advised that the Queen's Guide, who leads the eight-mile walks across this very dangerous bay, with its strong tides, strong river current and shifting quick-sands, had cancelled the event because the weather conditions made it unsafe. It took me another good half-hour to change back into normal household clothes and put everything away before sinking into the arm-chair, as opposed to sinking into the quick-sand.

Another telephone call the following day advised me that the walk would now be rescheduled during 2011, so there is lots of time for you to contact me to add your name to my list of sponsors and to donate good money to a worthy cause, if you have not already done so. I shan't be collecting until after I have completed the walk, so you have lots of time to save up and can afford to be generous.

On Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup>, our neighbour across the back fence attracted my attention as I was emptying the recycling bins and told me some chaps were coming to cut down three trees in her back garden. I asked if I could have the logs for the fire and she said she would enquire.

It wasn't long before the men arrived and I observed their technique for future reference. (That's how I have learnt most things. That and trial and error. Mind you, I don't have the equipment they do. Enough of my problems.) After cutting down two of the trees, our neighbour attracted my attention again. The chaps had some logs for me and passed them to me over the fence. That was the easy part. I carried them round to the front and stacked them under the car port.

Since Jenny wanted to go out shopping (its one of those things women do best), I told the tree fellers (actually, there was only two of them) I could not wait for them to cut down the third tree and asked if they would stack the logs for me to collect later, which they did.

After we had returned from our expensive excursion and had lunch, I went round to survey the situation. The logs in question were somewhat larger than I had expected and there were a lot of them. My original plan was to fetch them with the trailer but since this was at the back of the garage and removing it required a lot of work, Jenny had the car at work and rain was forecast, I decided to try Plan B (yet again). I managed to raise a fence

panel and push the first two logs through, then I walked all the way back round, picked up the logs and placed them on the patio. Moving the logs in this way was going to take some time and I called Mike, our neighbour down the road, to ask if he would help. Sure enough, he was here in a flash (not to be confused with another chap similarly described but with a different name).

I went back to the stack of logs and started to move them through the fence as Mike collected them and moved them onto the patio. About fifteen minutes saw the job done, the fence panel reinstated and me back home looking at the heap on the patio. I did not contemplate collapsing into this one, since the process would have been somewhat painful.

I thanked Mike and he went off to cut his grass before the rains came. I moved the logs under cover of the car port one by one and, feeling totally cream-crackered, proceeded to give the lawn mower an airing and cut the grass on the side of the house (a) before it started to rain and (b) before the man employed by the council could get his tractor on it.

I was ready for a beer. I didn't get one (again). Instead, I sat down and wondered how I was going to reduce the size of the logs to such that they would burn on my fire, thinking I might have to invest in a chain saw. It might be cheaper to buy the logs ready-cut. Jenny also pointed out that we are approaching 5<sup>th</sup> November and logs are currently in demand, so I shall have to keep a watch on them, not that there is much danger of anyone lifting these and carrying them any distance.

On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>, Rachel and Jenny were once again on a Scout training course, this time learning how to tie people up in knots. This was the First Response session and they now have enough knowledge to render first aid to dummies.

I spent the day washing Rachel's car and doing the usual chores round the house. Some people lead exciting lives.

On Sunday we went to the local garden centre to spend the one pound voucher we had received and we put the cost towards more odourless lamp oil for, you guessed it, the oil lamps. We also had a voucher for a free bag of daffodil bulbs and these are planted on the shelf in the garage waiting for it to stop raining.

Monday was another productive day, spent tidying up the garage so we can fit one of the cars in it, now that cold, frosty nights are with us again. Putting one car in the garage and the other on the drive, under the car port keeps the cars warmer, frost-free and is safer than leaving them on the road all night.

I have also revamped my personal web site, [www.networking-consultancy.com](http://www.networking-consultancy.com) and added a section on the environment. I have sent a scathing E-mail to the Canadian Alberta Press Association complaining about the press' lack of enthusiasm for tackling the government there over licences to the oil companies for the increased development of

the tar sands and widespread devastation of large areas of natural beauty, forest and wildlife. If I disappear suddenly in suspicious circumstances, you'll know why.

And on that note, the month comes to an uneventful end.