

Greenmount September 2018

Saturday, 1st September 2018

We spent the morning at the Old School helping with the village drop-in and I spent the afternoon updating the village web site while Rachel and Jenny packed the car for the following day's car boot sale.

In the early evening, I listened to Jazz Record Requests, which included a recording of Change of Key Boogie with Wilbur de Paris on trombone, which I had requested in July. If you're reading this, thank you Alyn Shipton.

I rounded off the evening just before retiring with the commencement of an update to my web site.

Sunday, 2nd September 2018

We were up at 4:30 a.m. on the first fine Sunday morning for about four weeks and the day looked promising.

Jenny and Rachel sped off to the car boot sale at about 6:15 while I continued with an update to my web site to include the latest couple of weeks' issues of Greenpeace Unearthed and my diary of activities and events for August 2018 for anyone who was interested.

The peace and quiet gave me an opportunity to deal with my E-mails, completing a survey on Brexit for my MP, James Frith and to deal with the TV recordings over the last couple of days.

An update to this blog preceded commencement of work on the garden at 8:30 a.m. The light wasn't so good, being overcast but it was quite mild and, most importantly, dry.

I cut the front lawn and a bit of the side nearest my boundary, leaving the rest of it to the chaps we paid to do it. The arrangement was that they didn't do the bit near my boundary and didn't interfere with my bushes and plants.

I trimmed the lawn edges and trimmed the hedge between our garden and the one next door, picking up the prickly off cuts and putting them in the brown bin with the grass from the garden.

I cut back the ivy along the garage wall to stop it intruding into the garage loft space and spreading round the front and back of the garage. That was always a bit of a scramble because I had to squeeze between the bushes and the garage wall and usually came out covered in all sorts of things. Thankfully, usually none of them were moving. The off cuts also went in the brown bin.

I cut back one of the bushes that was overhanging the common land because it was preventing the chaps from cutting the grass and pulled up a few weeds and wild brambles. I trimmed off the cut branches, putting the waste in the brown bin and keeping the sturdier branches for the fire.

I cut down the flowers of a plant in the front, side garden that had gone to seed and disposed of the rubbish in the brown bin, which was now quite full. Unfortunately, a good proportion of the seeds just blew everywhere and it occurred to me that I should have dead-headed the flowers when they had died off and before they had gone to seed to prevent them spreading like wildfire.

I decided to come in for some lunch. It was 12:30 p.m., warm and sunny with a good deal of nice, blue sky.

After washing the pots and putting the rubbish in the various bins, I returned to my gardening.

I spent the rest of the afternoon tidying up the border along the side of the drive and I had just about finished when Jenny and Rachel returned just after 4 p.m. having had a reasonable day of trading.

I came in for a rest and we had a cup of tea.

Monday, 3rd September 2018

It was a miserable, wet day and we didn't exactly get off to a flying start.

My first job was to repair the catch on the back bedroom door which had been very stiff for a while. I sympathised. I found the cover plates on each side of the door difficult to remove until I loosened the small grub screws in each of the door knobs, then I was able to unscrew them and remove the knobs. This freed up the latch mechanism and it was fine.

I cleaned and lubricated the door knob fitting inside and then refitted them. The latch was much easier to operate and the problem was solved.

I turned my attention to the floor plate for the door between the kitchen and dining room and prepared to commence work on that.

Jenny was emptying the car of her car boot stock and needed my help occasionally so I had to keep leaving off and we reached the point where we both needed a break and some lunch.

Needless to say I didn't get back to the job in hand after a late lunch. I wasn't feeling too well and I sat down with the Radio Times crossword. I thought that the physical activity of the previous day was catching up with me.

I had planned to go to an exhibition of local groups in Ramsbottom Civic Hall in the evening but I really didn't feel like it.

Tuesday, 4th September 2018

I was up at 7 a.m. to put out the waste bin for collection and to bring in the Abel and Cole order. There was a bit of a drizzle and it wasn't gardening weather, especially after the rain the previous day so I prepared to carry on with the door plate until Jenny said she would like to go into Ramsbottom for some fresh air.

By the time we set off it was late morning and we took the car rather than walking, which I would have preferred, for the exercise.

We toured the charity shops, with a little success, finding a couple of DVDs, a CD of Chris Barber's Jazz Band for me and a book for Jenny.

We came home for lunch and I spent the afternoon updating my CD and DVD documentation. With several of my recent purchases having been missed off my old list, I printed a new one.

The police speed watch meeting had been postponed and I spent most of the evening working on the revised version of the Greenmount Village web site.

Wednesday, 5th September 2018

It was another late start and a beautiful sunny day. I was still feeling groggy.

After breakfast and the usual chores, I updated this blog.

We had planned to go to the furniture store in Uttoxeter to look at oak, high chairs but Jenny wanted to do some washing and baking so we gave that a miss. I formed the impression that her arthritis was much better and not causing so much pain, so she didn't feel the need for a perching stool in the kitchen.

My first major job was to pick the blackberries and that was interrupted with an unscheduled and very welcome visit from Mike and Lorna, who stayed for a chat and a cup of coffee.

With the blackberries picked, we had some lunch.

After lunch and finishing the Radio Times crossword, I went back outside and applied weed killer to the unwanted growth in the block paving. While on a killing spree, I also treated the footpath and road gutter from the southern end of our property up to the point to which I used to cut the grass on the side. The chaps came round to cut the grass on the common land, too, which made everything look so much better.

My final tasks outside on the lovely, sunny evening were to cut the grass on the back lawn, clean the lawn mower and put everything away, finishing about 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, 6th September 2018

I spent much of the day searching for and ordering the odd grocery item and a cable to connect Rachel's laptop to the TV.

Friday, 7th September 2018

The usual grocery shop turned out to be somewhat more of a spending spree.

We called at the shower shop in Bury to see if we could obtain a replacement slider for the shower, the one we had having broken. The lady who owned the shop was on holiday and the young lady who was her temporary help did her best to find one but couldn't. She said she would contact the owner and I left my telephone number with her.

The car was running low on diesel so we called at Tesco's garage on our way to Halfords to collect some Glym car wash I had ordered online the previous day using the "click and collect" option. While there, the screen wash being on offer, I bought a second one from the stock in store.

We made our way to the Trafford Centre, to John Lewis. The Ken Hom wok we had bought a couple of weeks earlier had started to lose its coating after having been used only twice. It was a shame because the 36cm, flat-bottomed wok was just the right size for the wok cradle that came with our gas range. As far as I could recall, this was the first time we had returned anything to John Lewis.

Jenny said she would look elsewhere for one, probably in Lakeland and then mentioned she needed some underwear from M&S. I suggested strolling up to M&S that was close to John Lewis and, as luck would have it, Lakeland was on the way.

We bought an oven tin and a wok from Lakeland and, although Jenny wasn't happy with the underwear in M&S, saying she would rather use the Bury branch, she did take a fancy to some cotton pyjamas that ended up in our shopping bag.

We finally made it to Unicorn for about 12:30 and, being so late, I couldn't believe we had to queue for the car park.

Calling at Saisburys in Sale to return some underwear with which Jenny was not happy and two Doves Farm tubs of quinoa flour that she discovered were over a year out of date when she looked at them at home after our last visit, it was about 2 p.m. when we finally reached Waitrose in Broadheath. We had taken the opportunity to buy a few groceries at Sainsburys and were quite hungry by this time, even though we had eaten a banana we had obtained at Unicorn.

After lunch and the grocery shop at Waitrose, we headed home as usual, expecting to hit some very heavy traffic. In fact it wasn't too bad, except for the usual busy stretch around the canal bridge and, if motorists had heeded the smart motorway speed signs we would all

have made our journey's quicker. Unfortunately, motorists on motorways seemed to have the mindset that every inch of tarmac had to be covered by a vehicle as fast as possible.

As we approached home, we detoured via Tottington to call at the Tesco Express where Jenny found the last six bottles of Yellow Tail Chardonnay on offer at £6 in the fridge, hidden behind two bottles of Yellow Tail Shiraz. Yes, two bottles of red wine in the fridge!

I spent the evening putting in the TV programmes for the week as usual.

Saturday, 8th September 2018

Having heard from Marie that she and Bob had received an E-mail to say that the trip on the Flying Scotsman from Bury to Hollyhead and back on the following Saturday had been cancelled, I spent much of the day verifying that was the case, finding out why (due to engineering works in the region of Victoria Station in Manchester organised by Network Rail) and complaining to everyone I could think of: Network Rail for their untimely scheduling, my local M.P., James Frith and the Secretary of State for Transport (Chris Grayling M.P.), that department having overall responsibility for Network Rail.

Sunday, 9th September 2018

Having made good progress with the redesign of the village web site, I had reached the most difficult and lengthy part: the picture gallery. This was complex because there was a 9-page index to the picture galleries, a page of thumbnails for each gallery and sometimes two pages and then a page for each picture. Also, I had to merge the Greenmount picture gallery and the Tottington District Civic Society gallery into one, the latter organisation not being able to continue affording its own web site.

I had written a Java procedure to generate the pages for the individual pictures, which saved an enormous amount of time and this needed modifying for the new version of the web site. That took me all day.

Monday, 10th September 2018

After the usual chores and putting out the waste bins for the following morning's collection, I was going to finish off the floor plate in the kitchen/dining-room doorway until Jenny shooed me out of the kitchen while she concentrated on making another two loaves of bread. We were down to our last slice so that took priority.

The bread-making process was complicated by the fact the ingredients were both gluten-free and organic, which meant that several different types of flour had to be accurately weighed and thoroughly mixed together to form the basis of the loaves. It all needed a lot of concentration. The result was far better than anything else I had tasted, even conventional bread and the ingredients were much healthier.

Having been consigned to the lounge, I used the time to update this blog.

I decided to set up the HDMI connection to Rachel's laptop for her, which took a little while, not being over-familiar with Windows 10. I still didn't like it.

I did some more work on the web sites before attending the village meeting, walking round with Marcus, who was taking over the management of the village web site.

Tuesday, 11th September 2018

I literally spent all day updating the village web site and I was shattered at the end of it. These updates were to my development version and it was my intention to publish them at the week end, since there was nothing pressing and more changes would be required as the week progressed.

Wednesday, 12th September 2018

Being absolutely shattered, I went back to bed after giving the cat her first dose of thyroid gel in her ear at 7 a.m. and we slept in until about 10:30, being awakened by a telephone call from Gwen to confirm the arrangements for the visit to the Rochdale Pioneers Museum the following day.

Lorna dropped by while we were having breakfast to do the same.

The new filter for the Dyson fan arrived and I installed it, consigning the old one, covered in fluff and grime to the bin.

As I prepared to go out and wash the car on the lovely, warm, sunny day, our order of organic brown sauce and organic ginger in syrup arrived from Dolphin Fitness. Jenny left off her baking to deal with that. She was not best pleased.

I washed the car, tidied up and came in for a cup of tea while it dried in the sun.

After a brief rest, I polished the car and cleaned the windows on the outside, finishing about 6 p.m. I didn't have time to polish the wheels, clean the windows inside or vacuum and polish the inside.

Thursday, 13th September 2018

We went on a visit to the Pioneers Museum where the co-operative society was founded in 1844 in Rochdale and had a very nice lunch in The Baum, the pub next door to the museum.

After lunch, we had a tour of Rochdale Town Hall and met and spoke with the Mayor, Councillor Mohammed Zaman.

The trip had been organised by Faith Greenhalgh on behalf of the Tottington District Civic Society and we had given Lorna and Gwen a lift.

On returning, I recommenced work on this week's update to the village web site.

Friday, 14th September 2018

I continued the village web site update in the morning before we went to help out at the D-CaFF dementia café in the afternoon.

Saturday, 15th September 2018

Since our Flying Scotsman journey to Holyhead had been cancelled, we went grocery shopping. We called at the shower shop in Bury for our new slider for the shower and then sped off to Unicorn in Chorlton, going on to Sainsbury's store in Sale and Waitrose, where we lunched as usual. Traffic moved pretty freely but, being a week end, the standard of driving was pretty appalling and it made me wonder how 80% of week-end drivers ever managed to find their way safely to the toilet, let alone down a busy road in a swiftly-moving vehicle. All my youthful practice on the dodgem circuit proved extremely useful.

On returning, I continued with the village web site update.

Sunday, 16th September 2018

I had reached my 71st birthday and I was feeling pretty good about it.

I finished off the mammoth village web site update and published the changes on the live web site, including the photographs I had taken on the Rochdale visit on Thursday.

I finished that just in time to prepare for the meal out at 4:30 at the Swan and Cemetery to celebrate with Matthew and Carrie, Rachel, Jenny and Marie. Bob couldn't make it and we collected Marie and dropped her off afterwards.

Monday, 17th September 2018

I spent the day bringing the revised version of the Greenmount Village web site up to date with the current version so that development could progress.

That was interrupted by a visit to the dentist at noon for a check up followed by a call to see Faith and John about a problem with a BT extension connection that had broken. It was one of those that plug into the master socket and it needed a complete replacement cable. The alternative was to cut of the broken plug and wire it directly into the master socket. John said, since it was still working and only the plastic had been damaged, he would try to glue it

back together rather than me spend time working on the socket. Fortunately, I did have a krone tool for making telephone connections if necessary.

We also called to drop off June's birthday card and she asked us in but we had to rush back because we had not yet had lunch and Jenny needed to bake some bread, which she spent the rest of the afternoon doing.

Tuesday, 18th September 2018

I started off the day by ordering a replacement door seal for the right-hand oven in our gas Rangemaster. The one in the door had disintegrated.

I fitted the new shower slider and then turned my attention to the covers round the pipe-work to the shower mixer that had come away from the tiles. It seems they had been stuck to the tiles and they had worked loose, particularly the left one, allowing a considerable build up of black mould behind it.

I thoroughly cleaned behind both covers and, while I had the mould-killer in hand, I sprayed the rest of the mouldy areas and scrubbed the grout lines and silicone seals, with varied levels of success varying from acceptable to pathetic.

I removed the clear silicone from the outside base of the bath screen, since this was very badly affected, my intention being to use clear silicon sealant to re-fix the pipe-work covers and replace the removed section. The white silicone would have to wait, as would the tile grout lines.

As it turned out, all the sealant I had stored away had set in the tubes and had to be consigned to the waste bin and the resealing was put on hold, which really put the shower out of action for the present.

I tidied up and searched the Internet for stockists of the Geocel sealant I wanted without much success, so I emailed the company asking where I could purchase what I wanted.

While looking at my E-mails, I dealt with a couple, including one requiring me to submit our gas and electricity meter readings. I mention this because as I was going into the garage to read the meters, Jenny was returning from the Red Cross first aid session she had attended at the Cricket Club.

We had a late lunch and I finished the Radio Times crossword.

I went outside to see if we had any more blackberries but there weren't many. We had obviously had the best of the season.

Wednesday, 19th September 2018

We went to Bury on the bus to try to obtain the silicone sealant I wanted. It was overcast as we entered the Millgate shopping arcade and was starting to rain as we left that behind, heading for the Bath Store. The Bath Store didn't stock any sealant for sale to the public so we walked to Marks and Spencer in the pouring rain. Jenny wanted some measurements taken before she purchased some new underwear and she had always found M&S very good for that in the past. Not this time. She was told she would have to make an appointment, something she had not had to do before and they were booked up for the next couple of hours. We had no intention of hanging around on such a miserable day for a ten-minute procedure and we had no inclination to wander off to other merchants in search of the sealant I wanted in the pouring rain. We also decided we wouldn't be shopping at M&S again in a hurry.

On our way to the bus station, we took a short detour to the Fusiliers Museum to purchase four tickets (two for us and two for Bob and Marie) for a World War 1 Charity Concert at the Drill Hall on October 6th. The significance of the date will become clear shortly.

We came home on the bus as the rain stopped and the sun came out, somewhat too late for our needs.

After a quick snack at home, I started to do some work on the computer, working on the revised village web site. I had reached the difficult bit – the picture gallery.

Barbara telephoned and we exchanged views on the Radio Times crossword. Barbara told me John was arranging a family gathering on 6th October at his home in Leeds. It was to say farewell to David and his partner, Alison, who were off to work Australia, their jobs commencing on 6th November. Having booked tickets for the WW1 concert, we couldn't make it, which was a shame as it was probably the last time all the family would be together.

I plodded on with the web site, not making a lot of progress.

The computer kept crashing, sometimes producing dumps, for which the analysis didn't make much sense, sometimes freezing and sometimes just giving me a blank screen. The problem I had experienced over the past few months was increasing in frequency and becoming a pain. I had considered reinstalling Windows 7 but that was a daunting task.

I started to prepare the village lap top I use for testing the computer-associated jumble to record TV programmes in case I lost the facility on the main laptop. Unfortunately, that ran Windows 10 and I needed to look at trying to make Windows Media Center work on it. Meanwhile, it was busy doing Windows and security updates which kept me occupied until midnight.

Thursday 20th September 2018

Having responded to the alarm and dosed the cat's ear with thyroid gel, Jenny asked me to fit some cling-film round the shower mixer to prevent water going down the back of the

loose covers until I could seal them so we could all come clean. After that, I decided to stay up – in my pyjamas – and finish off the village's lap top updates and I loaded up Jenny's laptop.

As the day progressed and we had showered and breakfasted, or, in my case, vice-versa, the laptop crashed a couple of times, producing dumps. The analysis of the first wasn't much use. The second, however, flagged up a possible issue with the driver for the mouse touch pad. I searched for a later driver, without success so I decided to take a step in the opposite direction and rolled back the driver to a previous version.

After a restart, I carried on using the laptop all day, mostly working on the web site redesign and it stayed up. It was too soon to state that I had solved the problem but it was looking promising.

I had suspected a mouse issue before but I was looking at the Microsoft wireless mouse and keyboard rather than the Synaptics touchpad. During the day I had been switching between the two without a hitch. I didn't recall updating the driver so maybe it had been included in a Microsoft update.

My expectations rose as the evening progressed and were dashed at 9:21 when the system crashed again.

Friday, 21st September 2018

The system had frozen again overnight and I rebooted it.

The Microsoft Debug Analysis Tool 1.2 was utterly useless and I downloaded a much more helpful and free piece of software called Blue Screen View. An analysis of the latest dump showed that the problem was most likely the Synaptics Touch pad driver so I downloaded the driver afresh from the HP web site and reinstalled it.

Unhelpfully, the reload I mentioned above took place just as a TV recording was about to start so I rushed to invoke it on the desktop I kept running as an FTP server. That crashed when I loaded Windows Media Center. I was beginning to think Microsoft had deliberately sabotaged Windows 7 to force people to move to Windows 10.

I reloaded the desktop. Fortunately, the recording I wanted was repeated later in the day and I scheduled that on both machines just in case one of them failed again while we were out. I also scheduled a second recording on both machines for the evening.

We called at Asda on the way out to Unicorn and the M60 was busy, as was the A56 to Waitrose and back, as we hit the school run on the return journey. The M60 was even busier and very slow coming back.

The laptop had crashed again during the afternoon and the second attempt at the recording failed. I scheduled it again for the third transmission in the early evening, which was successful.

Saturday, 22nd September 2018

We spent most of the day at the Old School working on electrical jumble.

The lap top had not crashed all day and recorded Jazz Record Requests for me. It was when processing that it displayed that it crashed again.

I reloaded it and analysed the latest dump. This flagged up a fault with a driver file that did not identify its source and a search on the Internet flagged it up as a Norton file, part of Norton Security.

I contacted Norton and a technical chap there took control of my machine with my permission to look into the problem. That went on through tea and afterwards he initiated, again with my consent, a disc check of my system drive. That required a restart and took about two hours. I said I would contact Norton Support to continue the investigation at a convenient time in a day or so. Meanwhile, the result of the disc check did not flag up any errors.

I left the machine running overnight, with the Synaptics touch-pad disabled and with Microsoft Process Explorer running which I recorded to a file using Microsoft Expression screen capture. Surprisingly, it stayed up overnight and was running alright when I finally got to the keyboard at about 11:30 a.m. the following morning, having slept in.

Sunday, 23rd September 2018

Needless to say, it was a nice sunny day, not the weather we had been led to expect and Jenny had missed what seemed like a nice car boot day.

It was well into the afternoon by the time we had breakfasted and tended to the morning chores.

Jenny and Rachel went to Bury and I started work on the floor plate between the kitchen and the dining room. Having reassessed the situation, I concluded that I needed to widen and realign the gap between the tiles and the wooden flooring to fit the base for the plate. Unfortunately, this meant not only sanding the edge of the wooden flooring but also sanding the edge of the porcelain tiles to line up the jagged edges the chap who tiled the kitchen floor had left.

I listened to a recording of I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again and a recording of Beyond Our Ken before spending the rest of the afternoon on my knees, sanding, destroying my sanding plate in the process.

Monday, 24th September 2018

I needed a new sanding plate for my Bosch multi-tool in order to finish the work on the floor plate and I spend some time trying to locate one that would fit my four-year-old Bosch

Professional tool. One would think that Bosch's Professional web site would be really helpful in identifying replacement attachments and that, if all else failed, one could order them directly from Bosch. Not a chance. The web site was about as useful as a chocolate radiator. Was there a helpful contact-us by E-mail option? No.

I resorted to a Google search and eventually found a supplier on Amazon from whom I requested confirmation that the part he advertised would fit my appliance. He sent me a picture of the back of the package, listing the models the part fitted and mine was on the list. I promptly ordered it.

I had seen a part on the Screwfix web site and it said it was backwards compatible with the fitting on my multi-tool. I did think about walking down to Screwfix in Bury to buy it before placing my Amazon order but Jenny didn't want to go walkies.

After placing my order, the post arrived with a voucher for Screwfix. Nice timing, I thought. Still, since I had to spend at least £50 to save £15, it wouldn't have been much use.

I went outside to tidy up the raised beds. I had to do some tidying in the garage first to get at the tools I needed and I just managed to start work outside before the unscheduled rain started.

I tidied up outside and came in. Jenny remarked it was fortunate we hadn't gone walking.

I replaced three halogen bulbs in the kitchen with LED bulbs I had obtained from the jumble at the Old School just to see how they performed. They were pretty good but I didn't think they were of exactly the right specification and I E-mailed a supplier of the particular make (Feit Electric) on Amazon to obtain the CRI, which needs to be 95 or higher to replace halogen, the full specification to replace a 50 watt halogen GU10 being 7 watt, 2700°K, CRI of 95 or higher, and a cone of light between 38° and 60°. In my case it also needs to be dimmable. (See <https://well-lit.co.uk/replacing-halogens-best-gu10-led-bulb/> for details).

After that, I came in and worked on the revised version of the village web site. Needless to say the sun came out and the rest of the day was fine.

Tuesday, 25th September 2018

Being a nice, sunny day, we walked into Ramsbottom. Jenny wanted some cards from the card shop and we took the opportunity to tour the charity shops from which we purchased a total of five DVDs and two books.

We came back on the bus and I worked on the village web site redesign after a late lunch.

We went back into Ramsbottom to Owens for the jumblers' annual meal at 7 p.m. None of our party had arrived and we went into the bar for a drink to wait for them. When none of them had turned up by 7:20, we checked with the lady on reception and it transpired that the

date for the meal was 1st October, which Jenny confirmed with Gwen, using her mobile telephone. We came home.

It seemed that the date for the meal had been changed after Jenny had made a note of it and we had not been told. Something about organising gatherings in a brewery sprang to mind.

Wednesday, 26th September 2018

Daryl Bailey arrived to service our log fire and sweep the flu a little later than expected. All went well, except that the smoke test produced smoke in the living room due to a downdraught even though the stove and chimney had been pre-heated. This used to be a common occurrence until we started pre-heating the flu with candles for about half-an-hour before lighting the fire.

It was suggested that the anti-downdraught cowl might be the cause of the downdraught, which, it was explained, when used in areas where downdraughts were uncommon, can actually create them. The solution was to fit a different cowl and Daryl, who installed stoves as well as servicing them, said he would obtain the item and fit it later in the day.

Afterwards, I finished listening to a recording of Beyond Our Ken from 1958.

We had an early lunch and then walked down to see John and Lynn in the afternoon. Daryl had returned and we left him fitting the new cowl.

We met Dave and Carol as we passed their house and stopped for a brief chat, joined by Mike and Lorna who were returning home.

A couple of large Jameson's, a couple of beers (wine in Jenny's case) and a long chat saw us staggering home after a very pleasant and amusing afternoon about 7 p.m. for a late tea.

Thursday, 27th September 2018

It was a lovely, sunny day and, after a late start, I managed to cut the front and back lawns and trim them before a quick lunch and heading off to Ramsbottom for my sight test, leaving Jenny to carry on with her baking.

My eyesight was fine, my glasses did not need changing and I really only needed an eye test every couple of years rather than annually, to which I was entitled, on the NHS, being over 70. My only problem was a little dryness in my right eye which the Vogel drops Jenny used would alleviate.

I called at Tesco for some tuna for Toffee, having ordered some renal-diet, "wet-food" pouches for the following day from the vet to see if she would eat those. I picked up two bottles of Yellowtail Chardonnay and two of Shiraz since they were on offer at £6 but I forgot the potatoes Jenny had asked me to bring back.

Jenny substituted sweet potatoes for the missing item and we had sweet potato wedges, together with broccoli and carrots with our home-made, barbecue-sauce marinated-chicken for tea, all organic and gluten-free, naturally.

Friday, 28th September 2018

We had what must have been the best journey ever to Unicorn. There was very little traffic on the M60 and we managed 70 m.p.h. for most of the journey, which took about 45 minutes door to door.

Progress on the A56 to Waitrose was alright until we approached the double set of traffic lights that were the subject of the major road works several months previous. There was a long queue of traffic in two lanes, all due to someone having the kerb on the left-hand side lowered for a driveway between the two sets of lights. Why on earth the council agreed to this work on this major trunk road during the working week was beyond me. I would have insisted it was either done overnight or on a Sunday.

The drive back to the M60 was heavy going due to idiots in both lanes who insisted on driving well below the speed limit when road conditions did not warrant such caution. As for the M60, it was down to a crawl most of the way home, initially due, according to the sign, to pedestrians in the roadway, not that we saw any.

We diverted to Radcliffe on the way home to collect some renal wet food for the cat, since she was off her renal biscuits.

Saturday, 29th September 2018

Toffee was still not eating, so we decided to book her in at the vet's practice in Radcliffe, the one in Bury being closed on a Saturday.

I shot off to Matthew and Carrie's house to have a look at his plumbing for the new radiators as he had asked me to do. Everything looked alright. I didn't stay long because I had to get back to take the cat to see the vet and I had left Jenny tidying up at home.

We took Toffee to the vet for her appointment at 2 p.m. The initial examination revealed nothing untoward so he asked if he could take some blood. He did that in the back room with the help of a nurse. Toffee wasn't happy, particularly when they couldn't get enough blood from her chest and had to stick the needle in her front leg. Still it was for the best.

I expected to have to come home and wait for the results. The vet asked us to wait and would have the tests completed in about 15 minutes.

The news was not good. Toffee's kidneys were failing and the likelihood was that she would be in severe discomfort within a few days. The best course of action was termination. We decided to come home and discuss it with Rachel and arrange the process in a day or two at

the practice in Bury. Meanwhile, the vet injected two large syringes of fluid into her to temporarily stave off the agony. Essentially we had two to three days' grace.

Jenny was devastated and I only just managed to fight back the tears, even though we were expecting something of the sort. After all, she was nearly 21 years old and I know I hadn't expected her to last much longer. That didn't help much, though.

We brought her home and decided to make her as comfortable as we could until we could arrange her termination early in the coming week and I telephoned Rachel and left a message for her to telephone me. We had told her we were taking 'Toffee' to the vet and she was also very upset at that point, which was not surprising since they grew up together.

Sunday, 30th September 2018

It was a sad day as I made preparations for 'Toffee's demise. My main task of the day was to update the village web site and to take some last pictures of 'Toffee, updating my web site with them.