

Greenmount September 2019

Sunday, 1st September 2019

The Windows 10 upgrade had finished and the PC seemed to be better for it, except that the wireless network was not operational. A restart seemed to fix that, except it thought my home network was a public one and not a private one, so I had to amend that.

My E-mail (Microsoft Outlook) was not working properly either, so I uninstalled Microsoft Office. It was at that point I found I had two versions. I uninstalled both of them.

I then reinstalled Microsoft Office and that worked alright. It even retained all my personal settings, my E-mail configuration and my E-mail file, which I had backed up just in case.

All of this feverish activity was fitted round my other morning tasks.

Rachel helped me put the wood left over from the dining room floor that had been stored in the small bedroom up in the garage loft. Rachel also helped me bring down three more lengths of skirting, which were temporarily stored on the stairs until I could varnish them ready for use in the small bedroom.

That was followed by helping Jenny to make her second batch of chutney in the kitchen.

I brought a few things on the computer up to date while waiting for the chutney to cook and then I helped to bottle it and wash up.

I processed the few outstanding TV recordings and listened to the recording of Jazz Record Requests from yesterday. Then I tidied up all the recordings we had watched throughout the week.

Monday, 2nd September 2019

I spent most of the day scrubbing (as in scrubbing brush and soap, kneeling on the floor) the kitchen and hall tiled floors. They were absolutely filthy and needed a good doing over.

Tuesday, 3rd September 2019

I started off the day by replacing the old down-light fitting in the bathroom and the bulb, so both, although a little rusted, were operational again. Not having found any stainless steel ones, I had decided to fit the ones I had obtained from Bolton Electrical Supplies, which meant enlarging the hole and for which I needed a larger hole cutter.

I decided to pot the basil seedlings, putting all of them in one large pot and sitting it on the table in the conservatory.

Jenny came out and weeded one of the raised beds and then helped me pick the blackberries. The crop had been poor this year and about half of what we picked was rubbish. Whether the bush was past its best or not I wasn't sure and decided to give it another year to see if it improved. I suspected the weather hadn't helped with too much sun early in the season and too much rain afterwards.

For the rest of the day, apart from visiting the dentist for a check up mid-afternoon, resulting in a further appointment for a filling each, I continued the work on the documentation of my audio media.

It turned rather cool on our return from the dentist and Jenny asked me to light a fire, the first of the season.

Wednesday, 4th September 2019

I felt rather tired for no apparent reason and I slept in until nearly 10 a.m. by which time Jenny had washed the dishes from the previous evening's meal.

After breakfast, I finished off the routine chores as usual and we decided to brave the rain and potter round the shops in Ramsbottom for some fresh air. So far, this had been a very wet and cool month and there was little expectation it would change soon, which was annoying because there were several jobs I needed to do outside.

There was some semblance of democracy returning to the House of Commons as the Prime Minister had been defeated in the first vote regarding our departure from the European Union without any trade deal. A second vote was anxiously awaited to confirm we could not leave without a deal, at which point the country was expecting the Prime Minister to call for a General Election at which point any ruling party other than the Conservative one would be a step in the right direction.

We went for a jolly into Ramsbottom. It was a fairly sunny morning with a few clouds around and the forecast was for a very dull and very wet afternoon, so we took the car. It did have a go at raining but it wasn't much and I thought it wasn't bad walking weather, except cross-country would be heavy going after the good soaking it had in recent days. Jenny found a couple of books in a charity shop. I had intended in popping into the hardware shop but it was closed for the week.

We had lunch at home and I produced the labels for the chutney we had made on Sunday, stuck them on and put the chutney in the fridge.

Jenny wanted to move a ceiling-mounted charm from near the back door and the plan was to swap it for a shorter one in the conservatory. While cleaning the former it fell to pieces and my attempt to repair it failed miserably so it was confined to the bin.

After that I felt rather unwell and sat down in the chair to rest. I hadn't felt good all day and I had developed some dizziness to add to my discomfort.

I listened to a recording of an episode of Beyond Our Ken that had been broadcast on BBC Radio 4 Extra yesterday, first broadcast in May 1960, to round off my day.

Thursday, 5th September 2019

I was, again, the last up but I made it into the shower before Jenny.

After breakfast and washing up the breakfast dishes (Jenny had washed the dishes from the previous evening) I sent a couple of E-mails, one to our local MP (Lab) praising Jeremy Corbyn for bringing back some semblance of democracy to parliament and one to Sajid Javid (the Conservative Chancellor) basically suggesting he should adopt a policy of wealth redistribution to generate money for public services instead of the proposed borrowing which would cost more in the long run.

Moving away from politics, I cleaned up the fire after the log-burning session a couple of nights ago.

My day was full of fun. Well, at least I was my own boss. Jenny said I could be – for the day.

The attention to the fire was interspersed with other odd jobs like topping up the windscreen washing fluid in the car (it had been asking for it for a long time), exhausting the supply of the diluted mixture and making up 2½ litres of winter mixture (1:4 as opposed to the optimum clean which was 1:9), exhausting the stock of undiluted fluid.

I also washed up again for Jenny after her bread-making session and tested the loaves she had baked to check they were done after an extra ten minutes in the oven. She had used organic, gluten-free, oat milk (as opposed to the usual soya equivalent milk) for the first time and the loaves seemed to have risen and baked better.

The documentation of my audio media was progressing nicely too.

Friday, 6th September 2019

Another grocery shopping day loomed and we set off on our journey to Unicorn without any deviation, hesitation or repetition (for the benefit of those who have only just a minute to read this).

The M60 was clogged yet again from where the M61 joined it to the Trafford Centre.

We called at Sainsbury's store on the way from Unicorn to Waitrose, the journey along the M56 being quite pleasant with light traffic for a change.

There was the usual egg and watercress gluten-free sandwich (just the one on the shelf) for lunch, which we shared. What culinary imagination existed within the Waitrose inner sanctum!

The return trip on the M60 was a breeze for a couple of junctions and then slowed to the usual crawl until we cleared the traffic joining from the M62. After that, it was busy but moving at a fair pace, at least as far as our exit at Prestwich.

The A56 from there to Bury was extremely busy. Finding the part-time bus lane at Whitefield free of vehicles, as usual, allowed us to make good progress for a short distance, speeding past a row of vehicles on the right, the drivers of which having failed to twig that the bus lane was not operating for about another thirty minutes.

I took the road up through Tottington rather than wait at the traffic lights in two long rows of vehicles at the bottom of Brandlesholme Road, which would normally be our route home.

Having failed to obtain a Radio Times for the TV programmes for the week at Waitrose, as I usually did, we tried the Co-operative store at Tottington. There weren't any there either. I ended up obtaining the last copy on the shelf at the local newsagent after unpacking the groceries from the car and walking round.

Having prepared the computer with the updated electronic programme guide in the morning, before setting off, I managed to put in the week end's recordings before tea.

Saturday, 7th September 2019

We were up early and at the old school for the village drop-in by 9:30. We immediately started work testing and pricing the electrical equipment that had been donated to the jumble and managed to sell £12 worth to visitors to the drop-in.

We came home for lunch, after which I dealt with my E-mails, updated my web site and updated this diary before helping Jenny pack the car for the following day's car boot sale, Rachel being unavailable this week end.

Sunday, 8th September 2019

It was a nice day, as forecast. We were up before the sun at 5 a.m. and we made it to our pitch in Ramsbottom for just after 6:30 a.m. The lovely sunshine and blue sky tempted people out for the car boot sale and the annual black pudding throwing contest, not an event one found everywhere. Those who didn't make it to Ramsbottom didn't know what they missed.

The clouds did gather around lunchtime but people were not deterred and, although our trading made a slow start, by 2 p.m. we had done quite well and, since some black clouds were threatening rain (the forecast had said there was a 10% chance of precipitation around 3 p.m.), we decided to pack up, which took about an hour.

We had a rest and an easy tea before settling down for the evening.

Monday, 9th September 2019

We started our day by emptying the car in the rain and storing our unsold goods in the garage.

My next task of the day was to sort out Hauppauge WinTV8 again. It didn't seem to be recording TV programmes properly so I used the instructions previously sent to me by Elton Adams from Hauppauge to uninstall it and reinstall it. After doing that and performing the initial channel scan, I found it was missing channels again. I repeated the uninstall/reinstall (each time requiring two computer restarts, which took ages) with the same result.

I decided to try a second channel scan after the second reinstallation without erasing the channel database. This time, it found all the channels but stored them in the wrong sequence.

Since it had found all the channels, I thought I'd erase the channel database and try again. This time, I ran the database erase as Administrator and the subsequent scan worked perfectly. Unfortunately, the guide was incomplete, so I had to update the EPG (Electronic Programme Guide).

Having spent all morning doing that, I scheduled a recording to make sure the scheduler was working. It was, but the recording icon was not showing in the system tray. I had a hunch that was because the wintvtray.exe program (or App as some people seem to be calling computer programs these days) was not running and I was right. Starting that brought up the icon to say WinTV8 was recording.

I had done this over lunch in my lounge chair and, satisfied everything was working as it should be, I suggested to Jenny we make some jam using the damsons she had bought from Unicorn on Friday last. Jenny wanted to give some damson jam to her brother, Wilf. It was his favourite.

A 1½lb batch of organic damsons with stones in to which I added six tablespoons of Highland Spring water took about fifteen minutes to cook to a pulp, with constant stirring and produce a fair amount of juice. The recipe called for only two tablespoons of water but I thought that wasn't enough so I added a little more. The recipe also called for an equal amount of sugar to fruit. I thought that was too much and we added 1lb of organic raw cane sugar in small batches, with the cooked fruit off the heat, constantly stirring the mixture to ensure the sugar dissolved (no gritty feeling on the wooden stirring spoon at the bottom of the pan). We tasted the sugared fruit after adding the sugar to make sure it was sweet enough.

The instruction, once all the sugar had dissolved, was to bring the mixture to a rapid boil until set, which was a bit vague and always the tricky part. First, contrary to what some recipes said, I constantly stirred the mixture as it boiled to prevent it catching. Once it started to boil, we put four minutes on the timer. Normally, jam could take a lot longer than that to reach its setting point but this was already looking quite thick and jam-like. Even the four minutes turned out to be too much. The jam started to clump after less than two

minutes. There were various methods of checking whether the mixture had reached its setting point. Mine was to gather some mixture on the stirring spoon and raise it above the pan, edge on so that the mixture on it could drop into the pan. If the jam started to leave a drop on the spoon that just hung there, the setting point had been reached.

We took it off the heat and it made almost three of our jars, which, together with their lids, we had washed, dried and then placed in a hot oven for twenty minutes to sterilise them. It was important to have hot jars into which the hot jam was poured, otherwise there was danger of the jam cracking the jar.

I produced labels to put on the jars when they were cool, the label containing a warning that the fruit stones were still in the jam.

We did have the option of removing the stones from the pulp before adding the sugar but this was quite difficult and would have wasted a lot of the jam. Apart from that, the stones helped produce the pectin which made the jam set.

So, it had been another productive day.

Tuesday, 10th September 2019

Being a nice day, I started varnishing the wood skirting in preparation for the small bedroom. It had been made to a specific design to match that in the living room, the pattern required being milled onto each length and the lengths had been stored in the garage loft. We had brought them into the house a few days earlier to acclimatise.

I placed them on two of Jenny's car boot tables (actually pasting tables) which I placed end to end on the drive and covered with decorating cloths.

The milling had left some ridges on the planks and they needed sanding down with my multi-tool and then wiping clean with a cloth soaked in white spirit before varnishing.

I left them to dry for the rest of the day and came in for lunch followed by some work on the computer.

We brought the planks in the early evening and laid them on the kitchen floor overnight.

Wednesday, 11th September 2019

I gave the skirting a brief, light sanding, a wipe with white spirit and another coat of varnish, leaving it to dry on the drive while we had lunch and then nipped into Ramsbottom for some more white spirit.

We called at Morrisons for a few groceries and bumped into Karen, a friend of Jenny's who we had not seen for a couple of years so we had a good natter. While talking to Karen, two other people we knew from the car boot sales walked past and we said hello.

We also had a quick look in the RSPCA charity shop and saw Dave, a policeman we have known for some time and not seen for ages. We chatted for a while, mostly about his son who was now nine years old. It didn't seem that long ago Dave brought his young son into the old school jumble sale in his arms. I couldn't believe it was nine years ago.

When we came back, the nice weather was drying the wood reasonably well and, later, we brought it into the kitchen overnight.

Thursday, 12th September 2019

The weather was not good so I decided not to take the wood outside in the damp.

Instead, I tidied up the DVDs I had watched and filed them away in my collection, which was in alphabetical order of title. That, coupled with my catalogue on the computer, made it easier to find what I wanted when I wanted it.

Much of the rest of the day was taken up sorting out my car insurance, due for renewal at the end of the month. I had a quote from the RAC which was about 10% more than last year so I checked out the AA and managed to get a quote that saved me more than £100. I gave the RAC the opportunity to retain my business but they didn't want to know so I changed to the AA. No doubt next year, I would change back.

Friday, 13th September 2019

The sun was out again and I gave the wood another coat of varnish, leaving it to dry on the drive while we went to help out at the dementia café in the afternoon, followed by grocery shopping at Tesco in Prestwich. This was essentially a top-up shop to tide us over until we could get to Unicorn and Waitrose the following week.

Saturday, 14th September 2019

We didn't get up very early and before we had breakfast, Graham from the old school called to ask if I had a spare kettle lead. The Horticultural Society was holding its Autumn Show and the PA system was not working. It was suspected that the kettle lead, which Graham had brought with him, was faulty. I checked it and it wasn't. Graham took a spare one anyway and I told him I would pop round after breakfast.

When I arrived at the old school, the PA system was not working. I checked the power source and there was no voltage so the socket into which it was plugged was dead. Moving it to another socket that was live did not fix the problem. I checked the internal fuse and that was fine so the conclusion was that the power supply within the system had failed.

I came home and continued putting in the TV recordings for the coming week, a job I had started the previous evening.

I went back to the old school at about 3:30 p.m. to take pictures of the Autumn Show for the village web site. It was then I discovered the PA system had another internal fuse. A visual inspection of that showed it to be intact so that did not seem to be the problem. I told the chap to leave it on the stage, behind the curtain and I would take another look at it. Meanwhile, for the day, they had to manage with loud voices.

Sunday, 15th September 2019

Most of the day was taken up with preparing the pictures of D-CaFF and the Autumn Show for the village web site and printing off a couple of pictures from D-CaFF, one of a donation for Joani Beale and one of the Greenmount Strummers, who provided the entertainment, for their leader, Rev Alan Morris.

I helped Jenny in the kitchen with some of the preparation for tea.

Monday, 16th September 2019

Well here I was, marking up the commencement of my 72nd year on this beautiful, blue-green planet, which wouldn't remain so unless world leaders turned the tide on global warming within the next three years. To do that we would have to stop using fossil fuels and start planting trees like there was no tomorrow, because if we didn't, there wouldn't be. The only two obstacles with that plan were the oil industry wouldn't stand for it and it would mean putting our social clocks back around 200 to 250 years. The human race would be a victim of its own greed, selfishness, apathy and stupidity and it deserved everything it got. My plan was to live long enough to see the beginning of its end.

Meanwhile, after the routine morning chores, I started my day by putting up a very nice framed document bearing the family coat of arms and details of its origin which Rachel had bought me for my birthday. As I had suspected for some time, the family name originated in Lancashire, so we had moved back to our roots.

I was going to start some serious work on the small bedroom skirting but Jenny suggested going for a walk, so we did.

We left about 11:30 and headed across the golf course to Bolton Road West and then took Redisher Lane into the wood. We crossed the second bridge and took the first path right which was a steep climb up through the wood, then across fields to Moorbottom Road, which ran around the bottom of Holcombe Hill. We crossed Moorbottom Road and climbed up the hill to reach the track leading to Peel Tower. Having climbed about 900 feet, we sat down on a Millenium Bench for a rest and to take in the view, albeit a trifle hazy, to Manchester and the hills beyond.

As we sat there, Christine Taylor and a group of walkers arrived and invited us to join them in a visit to Peel Tower, Christine having a key. Jenny waited at the bottom while I climbed the stairs to the top. The view on a clear day was beautiful but there was too much haze to see Snowdon or the Dee estuary. We could just make out Kinder Scout, Pendle Hill and, in

the distance, I thought, some Lake District peaks. The group sang Happy Birthday to me at the top of the tower.

When we left the tower, we parted company, the walkers making their way home, having started from Bury that morning and we walking along the track northwards. Jenny declined the option of going over Bull Hill and we headed for Buckden Wood.

We turned down Buckden Wood, crossed the Helmshore road and continued down through Lower Buckden Wood to eventually emerge at Stubins, where we walked the short distance along the main road to Ramsbottom.

We caught the bus at the turning circle by the leisure complex back towards Bury, alighting at Vernon Road and walked the short distance home, arriving about 4 p.m.

In all, I estimated we had covered about 6 or 7 miles on foot with one steep climb of about 900 feet.

Tuesday, 17th September 2019

It was another nice, sunny day so I decided to do some gardening. I cut the grass on the back and trimmed the edges. I tied up the blackberry bush that was growing rapidly in all directions and encroaching on Jenny's washing line. I also tied up the branches on the other side of the fence, on the common land, where the chaps were cutting the grass again and making a much better job of it this time, using a hand-operated, petrol mower and collecting all the cuttings. It looked really good.

I finished off the morning session by starting to trim back the bush on the other side of the fence that was hanging over our garden, having extricated the blackberry bush runners from it. I was grappling with a rather large, cumbersome branch I was cutting off the bush with the bow-saw when Jenny called to say lunch was ready. I left off after I had finished cutting off the branch, which had fallen on me and I had trimmed off all the foliage. The branch itself was destined for the fire.

I finished off the bush after lunch and hoed and tidied the back borders before mowing the front lawn and trimming the edges of that.

While using the strimmer, our neighbour across the road came over. He had a dead tree that had been removed from his back garden and he asked me if I wanted to collect it for firewood. I went across with him and, together with the builder working on his new patio, we carried the tree across and stored it under the car port. The builder remarked we were tree fellers.

Afterwards, I turned my attention to pruning back the bushes on the side of the drive before tidying up and coming in for a shower at the end of a most productive day.

Wednesday, 18th September 2019

The gardening was put on hold because I got up late (the alarm on the telephone handset did not go off because the handset was not seated correctly on the base and the battery had run down), it was much colder than expected (more clouds than sunshine) and Jenny wanted to do a grocery top-up shop in Bury.

More importantly, Jenny wanted to make some bread so I helped her with mixing the dry ingredients before realising we did not have the correct type of 'milk' (oat or hemp 'milk') so we left the ingredients covered in a bowl until we could obtain some.

We took the rubbish to the tip and then called at Home Bargains on the way back, mainly for some Highland Spring bottled water.

We came home for lunch and I continued my audio media documentation for a short while before going out to pick the ripe blackberries again and, this time, we made a small amount of jam, having picked just 1 lb of fruit.

Thursday, 19th September 2019

We shifted our grocery shopping day from Friday because we were spending the week end in Sheffield and needed Friday to organise ourselves so that we were ready to set off early on Saturday.

The Journey down to Unicorn was not too bad with a slow section of the M60 from just after we joined it at Prestwich to the Trafford Centre.

I wasn't feeling too well when we left and my stomach ache was even worse when we got to Unicorn, persisting during our visit to Sainsbury's store in Sale.

By the time we reached Waitrose, I was also aching quite a bit and feeling a little dizzy. The sight of two gluten-free, chicken salad sandwiches, the last two on the shelf, made me feel a little better and we had those and a pot of tea each for lunch before grocery shopping there.

My stomach ache continued throughout this foraging episode and a blocked gent's toilet didn't help. I used the accessible one instead and reported the blockage, which was in no way connected with my complaint, to customer services. I did explain I had tried to clear the blockage by flushing the toilet, almost causing the bowl to overflow and flood the place.

The drive home was not bad except for a slow section on the M60 from just after joining it, over the canal bridge, to just after the M62 junction.

The A56 was from Prestwich to Bury was also busy and we came through Bury just as the schools were finishing.

Jenny had received a text message from the village surgery just after we had passed it on the way out asking her to arrange a slot for her flu jab so I dropped her off there on the way back and came home to unpack the car. Jenny walked the short distance home.

I updated the accounts, tidied up a few discrepancies in my list of CDs and dealt with my E-mails, which involved submitting my meter readings to my energy supplier, having declined the option of a smart meter, wisely so according to recent reports on their shortcomings.

Friday, 20th September 2019

I spent the morning putting in the TV recordings for the week and helping Jenny bake the loaf of bread for which we mixed the dry ingredients on Wednesday, having bought two cartons of gluten-free oat milk from Waitrose.

After lunch I finished off the two remaining TV recordings which needed to be on the lounge machine due to a clash on my other machine. This proved difficult because Hauppauge WinTV was playing up again and that took a few minutes to sort out. Also the portable drive I had used on the other machine in the conservatory was flagging up errors and needed a scan to fix them. That worked fine.

I gave a small display box Rachel had purchased a third coat of varnish for her so she could do whatever she needed to do while we were away over the week end.

By this time, the beautiful, sunny day was drawing to a close so it was pointless starting anything outside.

Saturday, 21st September 2019

We set off for Sheffield and made good time until we reached the end of the M67, where there was a stream of slow moving traffic extending all the way through Mottram. It took us two hours to reach our first stop, Shiregreen Cemetery.

We searched in vain for the grave of Winifred, Jenny's recently departed sister. Being the week end, the office was closed so we could not obtain the grave number.

After half an hour of searching, we motored on to our hotel, the Travelodge at Meadowhall.

We settled in and then went up the road to see Jenny's brother, Wilf and his wife, Anne. We were supposed to be meeting one of Winifred's granddaughters, Rebecca and her husband, Graham, there before going to Le Bistro at Wentworth for an evening meal but Rebecca sent a text message to Jenny to say they would meet us there.

We all went down to the restaurant and had an excellent meal with very good service. Rebecca and Graham said their farewells and vowed to meet up with us again soon, possibly here in Greenmount and to bring Anne and Wilf with them.

We took Anne and Wilf home, stayed and chatted for a while and made our way to our hotel around midnight.

Sunday, 22nd September 2019

We had breakfast in our room, having brought our own, gluten-free food. The hotel's breakfast was both expensive and severely lacking in gluten-free options.

We started our day with a visit to Anne and Wilf. Their son, Barry and his new partner, Kerry arrived with their lovely, four-month-old son, Joshua who was, naturally, the centre of attention.

We left about 2 p.m. to go for lunch at Pret a Manger in the Meadowhall shopping mall, where we knew we could obtain a meal comprising gluten-free ingredients.

After lunch we went to see my cousin, Ann and her husband, Trevor, in Chapeltown and spent the rest of the afternoon with them.

We left about 5:30 p.m. to meet Jenny's nephew, Simon and his partner, Vicky, for an evening meal at the Wagon and Horses, a Wetherstone public house, in Chapeltown. Again, our choice of establishment was determined by our knowledge that the Wetherspoon pubs had a gluten-free menu. Our meal was very good.

We parted company about 9:30 and made our way back to the hotel for an early night.

Monday, 23rd September 2019

After breakfast in our room again, we checked out of the hotel and went to see Anne and Wilf. We left there about noon and dropped them off at the footpath leading down to Meadowhall Interchange before heading home.

The stretch through Mottram was slow and painful and there was nearly a nasty accident at the roundabout at the end of the M67 when the vehicle in front of us swerved from the right into our lane without signalling as we approached the slip road to the motorway and then back again, narrowly missing a vehicle on our right.

We arrived home at about 2 p.m. and unpacked the car.

We spent the afternoon tidying up and sorting things out. My major task was to recover from forgetting to turn on the computer in the conservatory to record the TV programmes over the week end.

Of the five programmes not recorded on that machine, One was also scheduled on the computer in the lounge and had recorded there, two were repeated later in the week and I rescheduled them and a fourth, Jazz Record Requests, was available on BBC iPlayer.

Tuesday, 24th September 2019

We went into Ramsbottom and toured the charity shops, where I found two DVDs. We came home for lunch and afterwards, I did some administrative work on the computer.

Wednesday, 25th September 2019

The first task of the day was to check the cooker ovens to make sure the doors were closing properly to keep the ovens at the correct temperature.

The left-hand oven door seemed to have a lot of play in it so I decided to remove the door and see if I could fix it. I removed the bottom hinge support and the door then dropped out. That was really a mistake because it was going to be difficult refitting the door with no lower support, so I removed the top hinge support.

With the door on the table, I removed the top hinge to see if it was worn. It wasn't. To replace it, I had to recover the backing plate. To do that, I had to take the front off the door to get inside it. While I was doing that, Jenny asked me to clean the oven door glass and I removed the grease marks and splashes using the same technique I used for cleaning the door on the log-burning stove, namely a small, hand-held tool with a razor blade clamped at the business end.

I replaced the hinge, reassembled the door and fitted the bottom hinge support to the cooker. While mounting the door in the bottom hinge support, I lost the plastic bush, which disappeared underneath the cooker front base plate, so I had to remove that, revealing more dirt and grime.

I recovered the bush and cleaned the bottom of the oven and then refitted the door. It did seem to be much better.

I turned my attention to the right-hand oven. This time I was wise enough to remove the top hinge support first, or I would have done if one of the screws had not had a worn thread which meant it would not come out. So I removed the bottom hinge, the door and then managed to force out the damaged bolt and the top hinge came off.

I cleaned the door glass as before and then set about looking for a replacement bolt from my stock of assorted spares. While I did eventually find one that screwed into the left hole of the top hinge support, it would not hold in the right hole from which I had removed the damaged bolt. I concluded the thread on the backing inside the oven front was also worn.

I decided to try using a self-tapping screw and found a suitable one, which worked a treat. I replaced the bottom hinge support, mounted the door and inserted the top hinge support.

With all the hinge support bolts tightened, the door seemed to close better.

I replaced the oven front base plate and tidied up.

While I had been doing all this, Jenny had been cleaning the ovens.

My next task was to put out a washing line for Jenny before we had a late lunch at about 2 p.m. By the time we finished and given that time to settle, it was going on for 3:30 p.m.

I helped with some preparation for tea and with mixing the ingredients for a loaf of bread before retiring to the living room to watch Pointless at the earlier time of 4:15 p.m. and to process the television recordings of today, ready for watching.

Thursday, 26th September 2019

After a very wet night, the sun was out, at least for the morning.

I had decided not to start work on the small bedroom skirting, because I would not be able to continue it until Monday. Instead, I spent the morning tidying up some of the TV recorded programmes we had watched, and updating the accounts, ready for grocery shopping tomorrow. I also checked for the best price for the wine we buy, Yellowtail Shiraz. Yellowtail Chardonnay and Yellowtail Shiraz Rosé in case we needed to buy any.

Jenny went out for lunch with Gwen. I prepared my lunch and then briefly continued with my PC work while the heavy rain shower stopped and then went outside to pick the blackberries. Jenny came back while I was finishing off and we picked through the fruit to weed out any unsuitable for making jam. The result was just over 1½ lbs of fruit which yielded just over three jars of jam. We always used less sugar than the recipe and hence we also reduced the water by the same proportion, producing a low-sugar jam with an intense fruit flavour. The disadvantage was that its shelf life was not terribly long and to maximise its storage, we kept it in the fridge.

After that, I helped with the preparation for tea before returning to my PC work at 6 p.m.

Friday, 27th September, 2019

Another grocery shopping day had arrived and it was not a very good one.

We set off fairly early. Traffic was heavy and, on the roundabout where we joined the M60 at Prestwich, a vehicle on our left, in the outside lane of traffic heading down through Prestwich, started to drift to our vehicle's near-side as we were in the lane going round to the right. I formed the impression, the driver had decided he or she was in the wrong lane and wanted to go down the M60 instead. Unfortunately, our vehicle was occupying the space toward which his or her vehicle was drifting.

Happily, I was wrong as the offending vehicle moved away and down to Prestwich.

The heavy rain on the M60 didn't help matters, although we thankfully arrived at Unicorn in Chorlton in good time and in one piece.

Our next interesting encounter was on the A56, making for Waitrose in Broadheath. We were in the outside lane, moving along quite nicely when the vehicles in front seemed to slow down. I decided to move into the left lane, since it was clear ahead and checked my left mirror to make sure there was nothing coming up on the inside. As my eyes focussed once more on the vehicle in front, I suddenly realised it had stopped dead. My first reaction was to slam on the breaks. Fortunately, I always left a fair gap between my vehicle and the one in front and, having already checked the left lane was free with the intention of moving into it, I did so somewhat quicker than anticipated.

Having completed that manoeuvre, while passing the line of stationary vehicles on my right, I realised that the problem was that the vehicle at the head of the line of three had suddenly found the right turn for which the driver had been searching and had stopped to wait for the oncoming traffic to clear. This had forced the other two vehicles which were following rather closely together to stop suddenly.

As I passed the rear vehicle, the driver of the one in front of that put on his left indicator and seemed to be of the opinion that indicating his or her intention to move into the left lane gave him or her the right to do so and started to edge out as I was coming up from behind. Wisely, the driver changed his or her mind as I motored on.

This all took its toll on Jenny, who was not usually a nervous passenger.

We reached Waitrose safely and had lunch as usual, finishing our shopping by 2:30 p.m. We expected the drive home to be a breeze at this early time. How wrong could one be?

The A56 was very busy, although we made reasonable progress – until we reached the M60. The drive home from there was a nightmare and mostly at less than ten miles per hour. It didn't improve when we reached the A56 at Prestwich to drive back up to Bury either, having to cope with the schools turning out at 3 p.m. Schools always finished at 4 p.m. in my day.

Despite not feeling too well, Jenny managed to prepare tea after a bit of a rest and I managed to put in the TV recordings for the next few days.

Saturday, 28th September 2019

The heavy rain continued, not that it bothered us much as we spent most of the day at the old school dealing with the backlog of electrical jumble.

Back home, I dealt with my E-mail and updated my web site before tackling the TV recordings from today.

Sunday, 29th September 2019

I was working on the computer for most of the day, mainly sorting out the TV recordings from the week end and publishing the pictures I took in Sheffield on my web site.

Jenny wanted a user manual for a processor that had come into the old school jumble and which was in very good condition so she could try it out at home. If it worked well, she intended to purchase it. The problem was that it was a Hinari and there was no meaningful web site for Hinari, only a telephone number and, being Sunday, the office was closed.

It took me a while to find out about the company. It appeared that Hinari was acquired by Alba plc in 1989 and Alba was part of Argos, which was acquired by Sainsbury's. Wasn't life complicated? I decided to take my enquiry to the top level and sent Sainsbury's an E-mail using their online form, which wasn't that easy to get into.

Monday, 30th September 2019

I had hoped to be able to start on the small bedroom skirting, having forgotten I had arranged to meet with Joani Beale to discuss the Dementia Awareness Powerpoint presentation in preparation for our first presentation for over a year, Joani having been ill and, thankfully, having made a full recovery.

I helped Jenny with the routine chores before walking down to Joani's house for 10:30 a.m. The session took a little longer than expected because her laptop had not been used for some time and she was using a later version of Powerpoint than I so the slides containing embedded videos needed a little adjustment. There was one minor amendment to the presentation and an additional slide to include with a third video, which proved to be extremely easy.

Joani's anti-virus software was also indicating the licence needed renewing so I helped with that and helped her apply the security to her mobile phone, leaving her to deal with her iPad in a similar fashion.

I came back for a snack lunch and caught up with more TV recordings, my E-mails and verified the amended Dementia Awareness presentation worked on my laptop from the copy on my memory stick.

I had a reply from Sainsbury's suggesting I contacted Argos customer support but not giving me the contact details, which wasn't terribly helpful.

I telephoned the former Hinari company and spoke to a very helpful gentleman who arranged to E-mail me a PDF copy of the user manual I wanted with then next ten minutes.

Needless to say, the manual did not arrive in my Inbox.

I found the web site for Argos and started a live chat session. Following a few exchanges, I was referred to Alba.

The live chat at Alba was about as much use as a chocolate tea pot.

The moral of this experience would seem to be not to buy Hinari or Alba products (not that we would, at least, not new ones), not to purchase from Argos (not that we did) and to be

selective about what one buys from Sainsbury's (which we were, sticking to groceries and, occasionally, wine when it was on offer).

My day, not to mention month, ended, firstly with an E-mail from my old grammar-school chum, Terry which was an extract from a report on the Media Lens web site regarding a BBC programme called Hard Talk in which the co-founder of Extinction Rebellion, Roger Hallam, was grilled by Stephen Sackur. From what I read, the BBC chap was put firmly and squarely in his place. It was rather chilling to read that Roger Hallam was saying more or less what I had been saying for some time; the human race was facing extinction within the next century or so due primarily to climate change, thanks mainly to the grip the oil companies had on the world and the incompetence and corruption of politicians world-wide. And we were rapidly running out of time to do anything about it. It reminded me somewhat of the Christian Bible Old Testament story of Noah and the Ark (Genesis chapters 6–9) where people didn't believe it until it was too late.

The second issue on which to end the month was that Matthew Skyped me with evidence of a squirrel in his loft. Perhaps the squirrel was wiser than the vast majority of people and looking for his Ark before it was too late.