

Greenmount September 2020

Tuesday, 1st September 2020

I went to help Matthew with a building design problem. It was one of working out the details for a sloping roof on an irregularly-shaped structure. We managed to find a solution, partly by calculation and partly by trial and error.

While I was out, Jenny had a call from Bea, who described what appeared to be more vandalism at the Incredible Edible shed and to the Incredible Edible plot itself. I rang Martin, our GMP contact and he said he and his team would look into it.

My sister Barbara telephoned with a problem that I was unable to resolve and advised that it required a plumber.

I had a late lunch and dealt with my E-mails before going out to pick the ripe blackberries again. This batch was for freezing since we had more jam than we could eat and we thought there was no prospect of Santa's Christmas Cracker this year due to the dreaded Covid-19 bug.

I checked with Christine to find out if the village drop-in was still on for the coming Saturday. It was and Christine had been measuring up for placing the tables outside in the school yard, since it was being held outside, due to Covid-19. That bug got everywhere. One might say it was more of a drop-out, being outdoors.

I arranged to go into the old school one afternoon this week to sort out some electrical items for sale on the day.

Apparently, this Saturday was a trial run and, if successful, Santa's Christmas Cracker would be held outside on the usual day, the first Saturday in November.

Wednesday, 2nd September 2020

We called at Matthew's house on the way to Sainbury's store at Heaton Park for this week's groceries. I took my drawing square to measure the slope angle of the new roof of his patio cover he was constructing. He didn't need to retain the square.

Jenny took the opportunity to call at Home Bargains at Heaton Park. On the return journey, we also called at Dennis Gore's Chemist and at Tesco in Prestwich.

After lunch at home, I dealt with the recorded TV programmes and my E-mails. I also decided to renew my AA membership and car insurance in the next few days, both due at the end of the month, having negotiated a reasonable price for both.

Thursday, 3rd September 2020

I listened to a recording of Beyond Our Ken from 1960, broadcast on BBC Radio 4 Extra. The BBC didn't produce excellent humour like that these days. It wasn't what some people today would consider "politically correct" but it was clever and it was funny. I did respect other, law-abiding people for whom and what they were and I took them as I found them, expecting them to reciprocate.

I went out and hoed round the herb plot in the back border again and then picked yet more ripe blackberries while Jenny picked over what we had, sorting them into those she would use for baking crumbles and those worth keeping and freezing.

After lunch, with the blackberries frozen I was about to prepare for a trip to collect some wood from Lorna's (a friend and neighbour) son, Simon when my sister Barbara rang with the news that her son, John and his wife Jane were moving to Devon.

Simon and Kelly had bought a house a few miles away and they had some trees cut down. The back garden was piled high with wood, mostly in manageable pieces and Jenny, Lorna and I took the trailer and loaded it up with wood destined for our fire. There was far more than we could manage in a single trip and I told Lorna that, if the wood was still available, I would go back for more in a few days. I needed to cut some of the mound of wood I already had, first.

It was 4:30 by the time we had unloaded the wood and stacked it under the side of the car port and I had tidied up. As I came in, the sun came out but at least it hadn't rained much throughout the day.

Friday, 4th September 2020

I spent the morning putting in the TV recordings for the coming week and there were a lot of them.

For much of the afternoon, I was trying to fix the problem with Hauppauge's WinTV8. Hauppauge support wasn't much help.

We did nip across to the old school to prepare for the outdoor drop-in the following day for an hour or so.

On returning, I decided to remove WinTV8 and install version 7 from the CD I received with my hardware, a HVR-1900.

That didn't appear to work. When I scanned for channels, it didn't find any. I removed WinTV7 and reinstalled version 8. That didn't find any channels either.

I checked the hardware and it seemed to be working fine. I checked the aerial lead and that seemed to be connected alright.

I discovered that when I put the aerial cable in, directly from the wall socket to the HVR-1900, I had left the old cable in situ, unplugged. That cable originally went from the wall socket to a splitter, with one cable going to the TV and one to the Hauppauge box. I swapped the cables over and removed the direct cable completely.

The channel scan worked. I left it to record a couple of programmes overnight.

Saturday, 5th September 2020

We were up at 6:30 a.m. so that we could be round at the old school for 8:30 a.m. That just allowed me time to confirm the overnight recordings were fine. Had I solved the problems I had been having? Was it that simple – a faulty aerial cable? Time would tell.

When we arrived at the old school, other people had already started the preparation for the drop-in and we put our tables outside and set out our electrical stall. We were also selling some jigsaws.

The rain held off until about 11:15, when there were a few small spots falling on our stall. Since water and electrical equipment did not mix very well, we started to pack up, having made about £30 in the short time we were there, which wasn't bad to say the event had not been widely publicised.

It is needless to mention that the rain stopped pretty quickly and didn't amount to much. Still, the usual monthly drop-in started to tail off anyway about 11:30 so we carried on packing up and we were home for about 12:30, for lunch.

After lunch, I felt a little tired after the early start and had a bit of a rest.

The boredom eventually prompted me to do something useful, so I went out and used the rest of my box of lawn food on the back garden before it started to rain. After that, I went upstairs to fix up the light fitting in the closet in the back bedroom, having previously taken the bits I needed into the garage to store away, thinking them to be superfluous. I also did a little more work on the small cracks around the window frame, preparing them for filling.

Sunday, 6th September 2020

I spent a lot of the day editing the TV recordings from the previous day and overnight, having recorded quite a few programmes.

Rachel came to visit and stayed for tea.

Monday, 7th September 2020

I finally sorted out my AA membership for the coming year and my car insurance, both due for renewal at the end of the month.

I dealt with my backlog of E-mails and then tidied up the TV programmes I had recorded and watched.

Tuesday, 8th September 2020

I went out to pick the ripe blackberries and that took ages. Jenny collected the blackberries from me in stages and sorted them out into three lots – rubbish, soft ones for cooking and the best ones for freezing. She took batches from me while I continued to collect them.

I washed the ones for freezing, we dried them and laid them out individually on trays for freezing, leaving the first batch for an hour to freeze for bagging while we had lunch. Once bagged, they went back in the freezer for future use. There were a few left over, which formed the second batch for freezing and these were later added to one of the bags from the first batch.

I tidied up a few unwanted files on my PC and dealt with a couple of TV recordings. One of the recordings was of a Tales from the Darkside episode on the Horror channel. Normally I recorded the two back-to-back episodes early on a Saturday morning but this week, that clashed with something else so I recorded the repeats of those episodes. The first episode recorded alright but the repeat of the second episode, according to the TV guide, turned out to be a repeat of the first episode. I decided to see whether there was a catch-up facility for the Horror channel from which I could record it.

This is where I was completely side-tracked. The information I obtained kept referring to “Horror Bites” but there was no coherent explanation on how to access this catch-up facility. I spent some time before discovering that a “TV Play” box (or presumably smart TV with that facility built-in) was required and I looked for a Freesat version.

While I found one or two devices that seemed to give me what I wanted, there was nothing I could find by way of a technical specification of the Freesat 4k HD recorder. I did find a review which told me something of what I wanted to know but there was no explanation of the functionality of the USB port on the back.

Having wasted a good deal of time on that and still not found what I wanted, I gave up for the present. It was all becoming too complicated and I was of the opinion it would have been simpler to stick to DVDs, except that a lot of the films I wanted were not easily available on DVDs and some of those that were available were extremely expensive.

Wednesday, 9th September 2020

We had another grocery shopping trip to Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath. We called at Matthew and Carrie’s house on the way home to collect a few groceries they had ordered for us from Ocado.

We had a late lunch at home and by the time we had finished and tidied up, it was too late to nip into Ramsbottom.

Thursday, 10th September 2020

We drove into Ramsbottom rather than walking in and back. Jenny wanted to get back to do a few things.

Ramsbottom was packed with vehicles and we had to search for a parking spot. There were quite a few at the Civic car park.

We toured the only two charity shops that were open and found a few interesting items at the RSPCA shop. I called at the hardware store for some Dubbin for my walking boots and we called at Plentiful for more organic caster sugar. We also bought a box of Whole Earth cornflakes that came coated with maple syrup, a cereal we had not seen before.

We were home for lunch and afterwards I went out to put some weed killer on the larger and more stubborn weeds in the block paving.

I used the remainder of the afternoon to start planning the TV recordings for the coming week.

Friday, 11th September 2020

I put in the TV recordings for the coming week, which took a fair bit of the day. There were quite a few for the second week running.

I finished off by taking the remaining bags of old, used soil, from when we moved the raised beds during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, to the recycling centre in Bury. Jenny came with me and we called at the garden centre in Summerseat on the way back for three bags of compost and a box of lawn food.

Later in the evening, my right side and arm were very painful and I had difficulty using my right arm. Jenny treated the whole area with witch hazel when we went to bed.

The problem was caused by lifting the heavy bags affecting my internal soft tissue on the right side, which seemed have been affected by the keyhole surgery I had to remove my gall bladder many years ago.

Saturday, 12th September 2020

I was still aching on my right side and didn't feel like doing much.

We went round to the chemist for my monthly supply of drugs – happily, I was still managing on only two pills a day, which wasn't bad considering what a lot of other people of my age took.

I took the car and parked in the old school yard so that we could collect some jumble that needed testing and pricing. I intended to do that at home and I spent the rest of the day dealing with the first box of it. That left the second to tackle.

I tidied up the TV programmes we had watched as well.

Sunday, 13th September 2020

I produced some labels for the new batch of chutney Jenny had made the previous day and put the nine jars in the fridge to mature. I was on the last but one jar of the chutney we made last year for Santa's Christmas Cracker and at which we only sold one or two jars.

Given the Covid-19 pandemic this year, we had decided not to participate in this year's Cracker if it were organised in November, as usual.

In between tidying up my PC files, I went out to treat the pots, raised beds and borders at the back with the slug nematodes that were in the fridge and needed using by the 15th.

We seemed to have a slug co-habiting with us, having found trails in the conservatory and in the kitchen over the past few days. We had not yet located the lodger, though.

I later went out to start cleaning the block paving at the back to remove all the weeds and moss and then came in to listen to a recording of Jazz Record Requests before tea.

Monday, 14th September 2020

Rachel had a minor problem with her car and took it into Finney's garage just the other side of Bury. Our task was to collect her from there and take her to work at Central Park.

We called at B&Q at Heap Bridge on the way home, just as we left the M66, for a new Hozelock nozzle for the hose pipe since the old one had broken and I could find no way of getting into it to repair it. Jenny had to pay for that since I hadn't taken any money with me. I also looked for a patio brush with the metal bristles for cleaning between the bricks but they only had ones with a metal handle and I wanted the wooden one.

Returning home, I dealt with the dishes, changed into my working clothes ready for the afternoon shift cleaning the block paving and then dealt with some administration work on the PC in my shorts, it being a nice, warm, sunny day, before lunch.

After lunch, I started work on cleaning the block paving, starting, as usual, with the patio. I managed about a quarter of it before we had to go and pick Rachel up from work and take her to the garage to collect her car.

Rachel came back for tea before driving home.

Tuesday, 15th September 2020

I was back outside tackling the patio after Jenny gave me a hand to move the picnic bench out of the way.

By the end of the day, defined by me being totally knackered, I had cleaned about three quarters of it altogether.

I used the rest after my lunch to check my revised car insurance quotation and confirm my renewal with the AA.

Wednesday, 16th September 2020

My 73rd year commenced and I was feeling good despite

- the worsening Covid-19 situation threatening the most miserable Christmas since the second world war
- Boris Johnson's Government struggling to tackle the pandemic and borrowing more money than we could afford, to waste on ineffective measures to deal with it
- Boris Johnson trying to push through a bill that almost certainly broke international law and breached the withdrawal agreement he had previously approved with the EU. (Bearing in mind he had previously been proven to have illegally prorogued parliament, this came as no real surprise.)
- members of Boris Johnson's Government laying plans for a trade agreement with the USA which included opening elements of the NHS to competition or, in other words, planning to privatise the NHS, despite Boris Johnson's promise that the NHS was not up for negotiation as part of any trading arrangement. Given the last two points above, Boris Johnson's promises weren't worth diddly-squat.
- the 90 or so fires raging in the western USA, no doubt as a result of global warming, while Donald Trump (President) was blaming bad forest management and quite happy to continue encouraging US citizens to use more and more carbon fuels (when they weren't rioting en masse in the streets in protest about Donald Trump's lack of action to deal with the endemic racism that existed in certain quarters, resulting in the shooting of at least two unarmed black people by police officers).
- the ongoing issue of plastic and other pollutants slowly killing our oceans (the Great Barrier Reef off Australia being one of the casualties, enhanced by Australia's Government encouraging the expansion of its coal mining, largely for export).

So, it was really a case of which went first, me, the NHS or the planet Earth. The one common factor of all three was inevitability.

For the present, life went on as normal and we went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's and Home Bargains at Heaton Park and Tesco at Prestwich.

We called at Matthew and Carrie's house on the way home. They had a bottle of wine for me as a birthday present.

After lunch, I went outside and continued clearing the block paving of weeds and moss.

Thursday, 17th September 2020

I finished off the patio. That only left the bit round the conservatory bay, the side passage, the front path and the drive to do.

I left off part way through to help Jenny pick the ripe blackberries, which Jenny stored in the fridge. We then had a discussion about where to store them and I suggested the freezer in the garage, which we had been trying to sell. It needed a good clean.

After I had finished the patio and started to clear up, I found Jenny had cleared a way to the garage freezer and had started to clean it. I helped finish it off. Jenny couldn't reach to the bottom of the freezer. When we had finished, I put the seal back in the lid, closed it up, switched it on and checked it was working.

We tidied up and came in. We were both shattered and Jenny still had tea to prepare, which wasn't too bad because it was warmed up lasagne from one of the freezer compartments in the kitchen.

Friday, 18th September 2020

I hadn't slept well and came down stairs much later than planned. Jenny had breakfast ready and had done the dishes from the previous evening.

I felt terrible. I ached all over, felt tired and found it difficult to concentrate on anything. I knew my brain wasn't working properly but I was in no fit state to do much about it. I also felt slightly dizzy and sick with a bit of a headache. It was a bit like the onset of 'flu except I didn't have a cough, any nasal congestion or a bad throat. I put it down to overdoing it the previous day.

I spent the day putting in the TV recordings for the coming week and tidying up what we had watched during the current week. That was hard and it took me a long time due to my lack of concentration.

I did manage to sort out my car insurance, due at the end of the month and I renewed with the AA after reducing the premium slightly. My revised AA membership renewal papers arrived after earlier negotiating a discount as well.

Another bonus was an E-mail from the clock repair people in Rochdale to say that my wall-mounted timepiece should be ready for the end of October (*watch – no pun intended* - this space). I had taken it in to be mended in February. The work had been delayed by the dreaded Covid-19 virus, not that anyone at the shop had been affected, as far as I knew.

With a second wave of the pandemic due (it was more predictable than our public transport), Christmas this year was likely to be cancelled so having the clock back and working was something to which we could look forward.

Saturday, 19th September 2020

It was another later-than-intended start to the day and I was still feeling rough.

That didn't deter me from continuing with the block paving and I finished the bit round the conservatory bay.

Jenny helped by brushing some kiln-dried sand into the gaps between the bricks I had cleaned.

We left off for a late lunch and I tackled this week's Radio Times crossword for a short while afterwards before finishing off outside and tidying up so I could shower and dress ready for the evening. My short stint outside gave Jenny time for her shower.

Rachel was due for late afternoon and we had booked a table for a meal at the Duckworth Arms for 7 p.m. to celebrate my birthday.

The meal was very good and I was impressed with the Covid-19 arrangements. I wasn't so impressed with a couple who came out of the entrance as we arrived and a bunch of people who went up to the bar despite the instruction that people had to remain seated, not approach the bar and that all service, including payment, would be at the table. The two exceptions were for individuals using the toilet and any one individual paying by cash.

Sunday, 20th September 2020

I resumed work on the side passage block paving. I left off for a late lunch and then picked some blackberries for Rachel to take home with her before listening to Jazz Record Requests at 4 p.m. Jenny put my tools away for me.

Monday, 21st September 2020

It was a lovely, sunny day and I should have resumed work on the block paving.

Instead, I suggested we walked to Ramsbottom. We went along the path from Summerseat, through the wood and then along by the river Irwell and through the park.

We visited the two charity shops that were open and walked back along the main road.

We were both a bit shattered after that.

Tuesday, 22nd September 2020

We started our day with an early-morning visit to the village health centre for our 'flu jab. That was well organised from the queue at the front, with only a very brief wait to be admitted to the building and a one-way system with the exit via the rear of the building, down the steps to the car park. The jab itself was painless and quickly administered, our time in the health centre being less than two minutes.

Unfortunately, this injection was against the routine, winter 'flu and not Covid-19, the latter having reasserted itself and now rife in parts of Europe and completely out of control in India. It wasn't doing badly in the UK either.

I cut the grass front and back, trimmed the edges, hoed the borders and swept the patio, all before lunch.

The plan was to go back out after lunch and continue with clearing the block paving of weeds and moss on the side passage but the sun disappeared behind some very dark clouds and Jenny thought she felt some spots of rain, so I put everything away and rested a little, waiting to see if it stayed fine. It did but it turned cold and remained very dull, so I did a little work on the electrical jumble we had collected from the old school instead.

I also looked for a new lawn mower since the one I had was falling apart at the seams and I also needed a new extension cable reel. I later decided to leave these purchases until next spring.

Wednesday, 23rd September 2020

We embarked on our usual weekly grocery shopping trip and this week it was, once again, the turn of Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath to benefit from our custom.

Having left somewhat later than usual, it was 3 p.m. by the time we had returned, tidied up and had lunch.

What was left of the day I used to look at the first day or so of the following week's TV viewing.

Thursday, 24th September 2020

Having experienced some difficulty with the Windows 7 hard drive on the desktop, I had reverted to the back-up drive, previously cloned using Acronis True Image.

Not wanting to rely on that sole operational copy of the operating system, I created another clone on an old 2 GB drive I had left over from my ancient, decommissioned XP system. I switched to using that.

No sooner had I solved that problem than the hard drive on the laptop started acting up again. I had previously tried cloning that but the copy did not work because it could not read an area of the disc, so I couldn't say I wasn't expecting a problem at some point. The disc really needed replacing and I needed to find the time to do it.

It seemed I managed to circumvent the problem for the present, though I was not exactly sure how.

In fact, I really needed a new computer.

I helped Jenny clear the tomato plants out of the conservatory, disposed of the contents of the pots and washed the pots. Jenny helped by rinsing the pots and drying them and we put them in the garage to store them.

I weighed the Fisher Price Off-Shore Cargo Base and worked out the cost of sending it by Royal Mail to a prospective buyer. I informed him of the cost of postage and awaited a reply, dealing with my other E-mails at the same time.

I finished looking through the TV listings for next week in preparation for entering the recordings the following day.

The Radio Times front cover had a picture of David Attenborough and there was an excellent article about an interview with him on page 32, the subject being his film "A Life on Our Planet", due for release in cinemas on 28th September and on Netflix shortly afterwards. The film focused on the mess we humans had made of this planet, the fact that the Earth was facing its sixth extinction-level event, what we needed to do to avert the disaster and the urgency with which we needed to act.

It was good to know I wasn't the only one predicting this disaster. The difference was that David still implied there was hope of averting the catastrophe whereas, convinced of the apathy, stupidity, selfishness and greed of most people and particularly all those wielding the power to act and enforce the necessary legislation and controls, I believed that devastation was inevitable. One only had to read the story of Noah and the Ark in the Christian Bible (my apologies to those of other faiths for my not knowing a similar reference in their corresponding Holy Book) to appreciate the situation.

That the Earth would bounce back, I had no doubt. Maybe next time, evolution would produce some intelligent life-form.

Friday, 25th September 2020

I thought putting in the TV recordings for the coming week was going to be a breeze. How wrong can one be?

I suddenly discovered a new channel had appeared on Freeview showing a shed-load of Tales of the Unexpected, a series I used to watch in my younger days and which I decided to

include. A new channel should not have come as a surprise, since I subscribe to E-mails from Freeview but, it seems either they failed to mention it or I missed it.

The fact I found the channel at all was a fluke. I had to retune Windows Media Centre on the desktop when I moved to the new disc on Thursday and it wasn't until I searched the programme listing that I found it.

Scheduling those recordings on Sky Arts in the Channel 11 slot complicated matters somewhat so the whole process took most of the day.

When I had finished that, I tidied up what we had watched during the past week and backed up everything, as usual.

So ended my day, appropriately around midnight.

Saturday, 26 September 2020

We had a leisurely start to the day and by the time we had showered and breakfasted, it was 11 a.m. – almost lunchtime!

I spent the next hour or so in the kitchen in my pot-washing role and, while Jenny was preparing the evening meal (slow-cooked, small lamb shanks in a Tandoori marinade), I wiped and put away the pots and cutlery as well.

Released from my duties as Jenny went to clean the bathroom, I dealt with the eleven TV recordings from the morning and early afternoon.

That process was interrupted by Jenny, requiring assistance in the bathroom. A small request turned into three other jobs.

After a mid-afternoon snack, I had another go at the task that had been interrupted. A telephone call from my sister Barbara took precedence and delayed matters further.

I did eventually finish what I had started, somewhat later than anticipated and I corrected a mistake in the recording schedule I had spotted as I retired the previous evening.

Matthew had contacted me on Skype on Thursday to inform me the few items I had asked him to put on his order to Ocado were due for delivery that day and, under instruction I had asked him to freeze the organic fillet steaks for us until we could collect them. He also told me how much I owed him and I attempted to pay him. My bank informed me it could not undertake the transaction due to a technical error. Obviously its computer had succumbed to the Covid-19 virus.

I thought I would bring this diary entry up to date, interrupted when Jenny handed me the telephone on which she had been speaking to Rachel, so she could go into the kitchen to attend to our tea. Rachel and I had a good, half-hour, pleasant chat.

How time flew. And there wasn't much of it left – for any of us.

Sunday, 27th September 2020

I was up at 8 a.m. and Jenny at 8:30 a.m., by which time I had just about finished the dishes from yesterday's evening meal.

Jenny insisted on resting after breakfast and I dealt with the TV recordings from overnight and then read a little of last week's Private Eye.

Jenny suggested a stroll down to see Lynn and John Turner, some friends of ours and Jenny took a small present (a dinosaur bed-side lamp) for their grandson, Ralphie. Ralphie was 2½ years old and knew just about every type of dinosaur that ever existed.

We chatted for a while, maintaining the prescribed social distance and then walked back for lunch at home. We met Frank, walking his dog, Ruby, on the way back and stopped for another chat.

I spent the afternoon (what was left of it) looking into cloning my laptop Windows 10 disc again using Acronis True Image 2015. That didn't work – I couldn't get True Image to load. I ran a repair on the product and didn't have time to try it again.

I wasn't feeling too well, either. My intermittent cough and catarrh had become quite persistent and my upper right chest and neck were quite painful. It suddenly dawned on me that the problem had been caused by my hiatus hernia and stomach acid leaking upwards, the most probable cause being some cheese I recently consumed that had been open longer than the "use within 3 days" stated in very small print on the wrapping.

The cheese was subsequently consigned to the food waste recycling bin.

Monday, 28th September 2020

I was feeling a little better but still in some discomfort.

I edited the TV recordings from overnight and this morning and then realised I had omitted to schedule three for today. I quickly fixed that.

I read my E-mails, including one from a very good friend about all the mistakes Boris Johnson's Government had made. I invite you to read them on [Porter's Pensées web site](#). You might as well. You will be paying and/or suffering for them.

That took me to lunchtime.

I had a quick look at where I was up to with decorating the back bedroom, not having set foot in it for at least two weeks, before lunch and rested afterwards, given my internal problems.

I had intended doing a little more preparation work in the back bedroom but we decided to go for a stroll up and round the golf course instead.

Tuesday, 29th September 2020

It was a nice, sunny start to the day with a lovely, clear blue sky and quite cold, being autumn. We had a short rest after breakfast before tackling the dishes. I was still not feeling too well and I suspected the recent 'flu vaccination had its role to play in that.

On a more positive note, I was reasonably happy I had fixed my TV recording problems on the laptop by very simply making sure the centre wire of the coaxial cable made a very good contact with the centre contact in the plug on each end of it. In short, all the problems seem to have been due to faulty connections.

The desktop was still producing the odd recording error and I needed to tackle that cable as well. Unfortunately, it was a little more inaccessible. The replacement system disc I had put in the desktop seemed to be working fine.

I had another go at cloning the laptop system disc. Acronis True Image couldn't read some parts of the source disc so I chose to ignore those areas and let it carry on. The resultant USB drive wouldn't boot. I tried it twice and gave up.

After lunch, I thought I'd try to clone Rachel's solid state drive to produce a back up. The Microsoft Surface 2 wouldn't load from the Acronis True Image disc. It also took me a little while to convince it to boot back into Windows 10.

My success period appeared to be short-lived.

I went outside and spent most of the afternoon on my knees clearing the moss and weeds from the remainder of the side passage. I needed some kiln-dried sand and planned to try to acquire some the following day as we went grocery shopping.

I finished the side passage up to the front path. I didn't continue because it was 4 p.m. and starting to turn dull and cool and also the end of the front path beyond the side passage was tilting down towards the lower path next door. It needed relaying on a firmer base and I planned to do that on Thursday. The weather forecast was for heavy, persistent rain tomorrow and sunny periods from 10 a.m. on Thursday.

Wednesday, 30th September 2020

I called at Wickes DIY store in Bury, on the way to commence our grocery shopping, for a patio weeding, long-handled brush and a bag of kiln-dried sand for continuing my outdoor activities as soon as the weather permitted.

We started at Sainsbury's store in Heaton Park and I put the bags of food into the car while Jenny paid a brief visit to Home Bargains, allowing me just enough time to listen to the last two tracks of a Louis Armstrong CD.

We called at Tesco in Prestwich on our way home, for a few items.

After lunch and a brief rest, we tackled the dirty dishes from the previous evening and this morning's breakfast. By the time we had finished it was too late in the afternoon for me to go across to the old school to take a look at a faulty vacuum cleaner, used by the lady who cleaned the building.

Instead, I started looking through the TV listings for the coming week to pick out programmes for recording. This was a two-stage process whereby I first searched the TV listings on the computer (using Windows Media Centre) for TV and radio series and specific programmes I recorded and then I used the Radio Times listings to pick out other items of interest.

As the month ended, matters were not improving on the political scene. The news in the UK reported that Covid-19 infections and deaths were on the increase, albeit more slowly than at the beginning of the pandemic in the spring and the news in the USA about the presidential debate yesterday painted a picture of a country falling apart internally with the incumbent president demonstrating his totally insanity and hinting that he would not accept the people's vote if he lost the election. His opponent was far more cool and collected even if he did look past his sell-by date. He certainly won the debate on points, deserved the presidency and would, in my view, certainly be much better leading the American people. Unfortunately, the best man didn't always win.