

Greenmount September 2022

Thursday, 1st September 2022

I started my day with a visit to Eunice. She had telephoned me yesterday to ask if I would sort out a problem she was having with her TV. I discovered that Eunice watched TV using the channels on her video recorder and that all her TV channels had disappeared but her radio channels seemed intact. I could not explain why this had occurred but I did resolve the fault by retuning her video recorder.

I then went back to the old school to commence work testing and pricing the electrical jumble. Jenny had already arrived, having walked round.

It was early afternoon by the time we came home for lunch, after which I helped Jenny and Rachel with their IT problems, Rachel on her laptop and Jenny on her mobile phone.

I updated my accounts and looked at the monthly projection which was not as healthy as I had anticipated, largely because I had originally budgeted for the regular payments as credits instead of debits. Having put that right, we were still in the black for the month but not by much.

I dealt with my e-mails and renewed my car insurance.

I had an e-mail of the transcript of the Prime Minister's speech at Sellafield today and sent a message to the Prime Minister's Office, essentially questioning his sanity. Anyone who believes we should be investing in nuclear energy should watch the film "Into Eternity" and then reconsider their position.

I resumed the compilation of TV recordings from next week's listings.

Friday, 2nd September 2022

We went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's at Heaton Park and Tesco at Prestwich.

On returning home, I dealt with my e-mails and finished off the TV recordings for next week.

Saturday, 3rd September 2022

I changed the bulbs in the bathroom and separate loo, the former being halogen and replaced with warm white LED equivalent bulbs and the latter being a cool white LED and replaced with a warm white bulb.

I tidied up a few things outside, putting all the used water, from washing the paint brushes after painting the fence, into containers and storing all the containers in the garage, ready for safe disposal.

I started work in the back bedroom, fitting the skirting in the walk-in cupboard. I turned my attention to the coving and started looking at cutting the corners using a spare piece of coving. In the end I decided to look for a mitre tool and ended up ordering one from Toolstation for collection tomorrow.

Sunday, 4th September 2022

I was not feeling very well, my abdominal pain making something of a comeback.

We went into Ramsbottom to see what was happening in the park. There was supposed to be a performance by the Bury Fusiliers Band but they had not commenced by the time we arrived at around noon. We walked round the various stalls and then returned to Tesco where we bought some bottled water we needed. We normally bought Highland Spring but the price had risen to £4 for six 1.5 litre bottles so we purchased some Eden Valley water which was only £2.40 for six 2 litre bottles.

I drove down to Toolstation, just off Dumers Lane, on the other side of Bury, to collect a coving mitre I had ordered, having decided to tackle the coving in the back bedroom myself since we could not find a plasterer.

We called to see Matthew and Carrie while we were close by and then came home for a snack.

I had a quick shower and Rachel gave me a lift to Fairfield General Hospital in Bury where I had an MRI scan of my abdominal area, arranged by my GP after the recent blood test showed a slightly raised PSA level. My appointment with the consultant at the hospital was arranged for next Friday, where I would be discussing the result of the scan.

The experience of the MRI scan was not unpleasant and the most difficult part was managing to lay perfectly still for the best part of half an hour. The strange noises of the scanner were moderated by headphones through which I could hear the Smooth FM radio programme. Keeping my eyes closed and counting the seconds I was in the machine helped focus my mind and the lady supervising the process gave me useful progress updates through the headphones.

Monday, 5th September 2022

My abdominal pain was still making its presence felt, although it grew less severe as the day wore on.

I tried out the new mitre on some spare bits of coving and I was satisfied with the result, although the internal corner I had produced proved too good for the bedroom walls and ceiling which were far from square and level.

I ordered my coving and adhesive from Travis Perkins and that was due for delivery next Monday.

Jenny and I went into the garage to look for something she wanted but we could not find it so I tidied up a little and came in to fit the first piece of skirting in the back bedroom,

the intention being to finish the job tomorrow. All the pieces were cut and in place. All that remained was to glue them to the walls. That was somewhat easier said than done since one of the pieces was slightly warped and the walls and corners were out of true. I liked a challenge! Jack could have built a better house than this one.

The problem today was that very few people took pride in their work; it was usually a case of do the job as fast as possible, as cheaply as possible and charge as much as possible. Most wanted the money for the least amount of effort. There were very few apprenticeships; young people were not interested in learning a trade and there were very few tradespeople capable of teaching one.

We lived in sad times, with civilised society going backwards instead of forwards and it was only going to get worse. Our political leadership set a very poor example and the “monkey see, monkey do” philosophy prevailed.

Tuesday, 6th September 2022

What an interesting day.

I started off by preparing the wedding package for Alison and David who were marrying in Scotland on the 17th, David being my younger sister’s grandson. That took a little while and I telephoned David’s father, John, to ask him if I could send it to him to take up to the wedding. We had declined the invitation on health grounds, which was unfortunate because we would love to have gone. We hadn’t seen David for several years. John was not answering his phone so I left him a voice message.

While I was in the middle of this, the chap from Cockelstorm arrived to look at the gate that needed repairing. It was fitted less than a year ago so this was under warranty. He summed up the problem and said he would contact me again once he had all the materials he needed.

After lunch, I set up the “Find My Phone” facility on both our mobile phones and shared the information between the two.

Over lunch, Jenny had been asking me to order her some more medication which was on a repeat prescription and I suggested she should start using the NHS application on her mobile phone so I installed and configured that for her, including going through all the security checks. We had to wait for her facial recognition to be validated before she could use the prescription service.

That took me up to mid-afternoon.

I dealt with a few e-mails.

Thursday, 8th September 2022

We went grocery shopping to Unicorn and Waitrose. Normally, this would be on a Friday but I had my hospital appointment tomorrow.

I made a start on the TV schedules for next week, picking out items to record.

Friday, 9th September 2022 and Saturday 10th September 2022

I completed the submission of the TV recordings for the next couple of days, knowing I would be out of circulation.

I had my hospital appointment at the urology clinic in Fairfield General Hospital in Bury at noon, following my MRI scan of my abdomen last Sunday evening.

The good news was that my prostate gland showed no signs of cancer. The bad news was that my bladder was not emptying properly. Oh joy!

A quick ultrasound scan of my bladder before and after a feeble attempt to empty it showed that I was retaining quite a bit of liquid. The solution was to report to A&E at North Manchester General Hospital where I was to have a catheter fitted. Lovely. I was really looking forward to that.

We came home for lunch and I asked Matthew to give me a lift to the hospital because Jenny could not yet drive, following her glaucoma treatment.

Matthew dropped me off at A&E at about 2:30. I reported to reception and, since the consultant at Fairfield had telephoned to say I would be coming, I expected to be seen by the doctor fairly quickly.

Not a chance. I was going nowhere until I had been triaged. Since I knew and the urology staff knew what was going on, I didn't see the point in that but there was no circumventing it. That took place after about three hours and took all of ten minutes. I then had to have some blood samples taken.

Another good three hours passed and nothing happened. A&E was teeming with people seeking medical help and the IT systems, only upgraded the day before, had crashed. I was beginning to think they had forgotten about me.

I eventually went to enquire what on earth was happening at reception and I was told to ask at the desk beyond the security doors. I found someone to let me in and a very nice young lady said she would take my blood samples and sat me down on a chair. So far so good. My good fortune didn't last. I was ushered back to the waiting room.

It was approaching 2 a.m. before the doctor called me in. She apologised for the long delay but she had been waiting for a bed for me. I was led to a side cubicle with no bed in it. She said the bed was on its way and it arrived a few minutes' later. Then the fun started.

I shall not relate the gory details but needless to say my catheter was fitted. The doctor was excellent. She explained exactly what she was going to do, step by step, before she started and gave me a running commentary on progress throughout the procedure, which didn't take that long.

I immediately released 1 litre of fluid into the bag and when that was emptied, a further half a litre. I had no idea it had been sitting there in my bladder and had this situation continued, I would have suffered irreparable damage to my drainage system.

I was made comfortable and managed to finally nod off.

In the early morning, a nurse came to put a canula in my arm so I could have some fluids intravenously, not my favourite method of consumption. I told her the best bet was to use my right arm in the bend of the elbow and that my vein was slightly off-centre. I was told that by the lady who took my blood at the local surgery.

The nurse proceeded to try to put the canula in the back of my right hand, which was a waste of time, resulting in a comment about me being awkward, which I took as her attempt at humour. She did get the canula into my vein in the elbow joint eventually, having sprayed a few drops of blood onto the bed, allowed blood to escape onto my arm and, as I later discovered, doused the bedlinen below my elbow in it.

I was later offered some breakfast but the lady had no gluten-free food available and I settled for some fruit and a yoghurt, not having eaten since lunch the previous day, apart from a small snack of gluten-free, teddy-bear, crispy nibbles a kind gentleman called Peter had given me in A&E.

A very pleasant male nurse called Brett came on duty and introduced himself to me, which was very nice of him. He was very helpful and reassuring.

I was discharged around mid-day and Brett gave me several spare bags for my catheter. He arranged a follow-up appointment on the 13th at 10 a.m. on ward F2, the Urology Triage Unit.

Matthew collected me and brought me home, where I had lunch and finished off the TV recordings for the current week.

Sunday, 11th September 2022

I dealt with the backlog of e-mails, not being in any fit state to do much else.

Much of my day was taken up with reviewing Joani Beale's revised Dementia Awareness presentation and I sent her a list of my thoughts, which was a bit more than she had requested.

Monday, 12th September 2022

I was expecting the coving delivery from Travis Perkins and I received a text message during breakfast to say the driver would be here between 8:30 and 10:30.

After breakfast, I parked the car on the road, moved the trailer out of the garage and under the car port and we both tidied the garage, in preparation to house the coving until I could use it.

The goods were dumped on the drive. The driver didn't even ring the doorbell.

Jenny and I moved the coving into the garage.

I tackled BT over the latest bill and managed to obtain refunds for two large, one-off items for which I should not have been billed. I later realised that one of the items was a bill for a second iCloud phone kit and I omitted to request a refund for the delivery. I did explain this item was delivered in error. At the time of installation, I reported a suspected fault with the equipment with which I had been supplied and a helpful lady arranged to send me a replacement. I also requested a returns bag for the faulty equipment. I managed to fix the problem and informed the lady in question as well as another chap with whom I had been conversing about a BT iCloud configuration problem, requesting both to cancel the shipment of the replacement item.

The replacement kit arrived with no returns bag and no clue as to where to return it. I left it sitting in its box on the lounge table. This bill had charged me for the replacement and its delivery. Needless to say, when querying my bill, I requested a returns bag for the surplus item.

My next job was to catch up on my diary entries. That included reconstructing the diary for May 2022 from Jenny's written notes owing to the irretrievable loss of my detailed entries.

Joani rang to discuss the Dementia Awareness presentation and asked me if I would revise the old version I had using the new version she and Laura had produced before our meeting on the 20th September.

Tuesday, 13th September 2022

I had a day out with Jenny at North Manchester General Hospital. My appointment was for 10:00 a.m. and I saw the doctor at about 1 p.m., having had yet more blood taken for analysis in case the doctor wanted it.

I was not happy about the long wait but the doctor was a very nice chap and a fellow Virgo. Although he said I had been referred to the wrong department, we discussed my progress.

He was pleased with my progress and assured me that my urine was fine in that the traces of blood and the odd clot had disappeared and were quite usual after the insertion of a catheter. He also assured me that my prostate was not unusually large, as I had been led to believe, which was good news.

The plan of action was for me to dispense with the bag for collecting urine during the day and use a "flip tap" on the end of the catheter. This would be more discreet and less of a hindrance. It would also bring my bladder back into function, having to hold fluid. He advised that I should still continue to use a night bag.

Arrangements were to be made for me to have the catheter removed in a couple of weeks and to be taught self-catheterisation as a back-up in case my bladder function was still impaired.

My next review was to be scheduled in eight weeks and I had to request a PSA blood test again a week before that.

We left with more catheter accessories and made our way to Sainsbury's supermarket on the way home. It was approaching 3 p.m. and we had not eaten since breakfast, apart from a small snack, which we had brought with us, in the waiting room. We always carried a bottle of water with us too.

We bought some fish and potatoes for a home-made fish and chip tea and I tanked up the car with diesel.

After tea, I finally managed to commence tidying up the TV recordings we had watched.

Wednesday, 14th September 2022

This was my first day without a bag for my catheter and it was nice to recover some degree of freedom.

The routine jobs of pot washing and rubbish emptying completed, Jenny went off to the hair salon and I dealt with my e-mails and updated my diary entry.

One e-mail I received, via an old friend, was from the Good Law Project, listing the names of fifty firms given a fast-track 'VIP lane' route to securing lucrative Test and Trace contracts. The battle to obtain this information has been waging for over a year. You can view the information [here](#).

I spent my afternoon working through the TV listings for next week, looking for items to record prior to viewing.

Thursday, 15th September 2022

We took the car into the garage, having experienced a little banging at the rear when going over bumps. I was offered a courtesy car and came home in it, having put some fuel in it.

I dealt with my e-mails again and then resumed scanning the TV listings for next week.

The chap from the garage rang to say the car was ready. The problem had been a bracket on the exhaust pipe at the back and it had been welded back on. Unfortunately, the rear springs and rear discs were badly corroded and the rear disc pads would soon need replacing. It could also do with a new exhaust pipe. It was alright for now and I said I would decide what to do in the new year, when it was due for a service and MOT.

After lunch, I took the courtesy car back and collected mine.

The chap from Cocklestorm arrived to repair the gate while I was out and he was just starting work. It didn't take him long to complete the repair to say he had to remove the post to which the gate closed and refit it.

While he was doing that, I sprayed the weeds again. The weed killer I had bought this time did not seem to be very good because the weeds had regrown quite quickly after the last spraying. I thought I had quite a lot of weed killer left but I just about had enough for the major weeds.

I turned my attention to cutting the grass and trimming the edges, after which I cleaned the mower and strimmer, tidied up and came in for a rest before tea.

Friday, 16th September 2022

Well I'd made it – 75 and not out and looking forward to the next 25 years despite my present predicament.

We went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's at Heaton Park. Jenny had an appointment for an eye test at the in-store Specsavers franchise where she ordered a new pair of varifocal glasses. Hopefully, when she had these, she would be able to drive again.

We popped into Home Bargains next door for a couple of items and then sped on to Prestwich where we stopped off at Tesco for a few more bits and pieces.

I couldn't believe it was 3:30 by the time we arrived home for a late lunch and rest before heading off to Owens Restaurant in Ramsbottom. We collected Bob and Marie on the way and Matthew and Carrie were already there. Unfortunately, Rachel couldn't make it for my birthday meal.

Jenny and I had some excellent gluten-free food and the service was very good. My only criticism was that the gluten-free sweets were lacking somewhat, both of us settling for Falshaw's (locally made) Ice Cream. That was nice, except for Jenny's scoop of ginger and elderflower which she thought was lacking in flavour. It needed some stem ginger pieces and the elderflower needed to be more intense.

We dropped Bob and Marie off at their house on our way home.

Saturday, 17th September 2022

We spent the morning and early part of the afternoon working on the electrical jumble at the old school.

After another late lunch, I dealt with my e-mails and brought the accounts up to date. Paying for the meal on Friday and Jenny's new glasses had dramatically reduced the month's surplus cash.

Hopefully, we would be receiving the £400 offered by our Government towards our inflated energy costs soon.

As for our new Prime Minister's, Liz Truss', plan to borrow money to give to the energy suppliers, who already had more money than they know with which to do, in order to reduce the impact of rising prices on bills, for which the taxpayer will end up paying, was just stupid. Her plan to open up fracking and grant licences to drill more oil wells in

the north sea when the existing carbon emissions around the world were pushing up the planet's temperature were just simply insane. Given the rate at which Antarctic ice was currently melting and given that the rate at which it was melting was accelerating year on year, we could be facing a sea-level rise of 25 metres before the end of this century and possibly by the middle of it instead of the metre or so we were being led to believe. Consider what that would do, not only to coastal towns and villages around the world but to arable coastal land and food production when the world's population was growing out of control and a lot of it was already starving because of the large conglomerate corporations that were allowed to control our food supplies.

This was a recipe for disaster and one that our world leaders had created or allowed to be created, thanks to people like Liz Truss.

Sunday, 18th September 2022

It was not a bad day and I went out to paint the gate and gate posts now it had been repaired. That took a sizeable chunk of my day.

I came in for another late lunch and a break, taking the opportunity to catch up on my diary entries.

I rested after that and fell asleep in my chair for about half an hour, after which Rachel arrived for tea.

It had started to rain at about two hours after I finished the gate, which should have been alright because the paint was shower-proof after two hours. There was a sharp, short shower just after I had finished but it only lasted a couple of minutes so I was hoping that had not done any damage to the fresh paint. No rain had been forecast.

Monday, 19th September 2022

This had been declared a bank holiday since it was the day Queen Elizabeth II was being buried. She had died on 8th September. She was the oldest and longest-reigning British monarch. It is a fate that awaits us all and, according to reports, at least she passed away peacefully, surrounded by doctors. The rest of us were not so fortunate.

I spent my morning dealing with the meter readings, submitting them and checking the utility bill expenditure. Our gas and electricity usage had dropped sufficiently to reduce our payments by a fair sum, our intention being not to use the central heating unless we had to do so and to rely more on our wood burner. At least I could keep warm during the day by cutting logs by hand.

That was followed by preparing the return of the BT digital telephone that had been shipped as a replacement for a suspected faulty one after I had tried to cancel it, having fixed the problem with the original item. I was planning on taking it up to the post office tomorrow, before my dementia awareness presentation meeting with Joani, tomorrow afternoon.

After lunch, I decided to tidy my small table by the side of my lounge chair. It was full of paperwork and other items and it was difficult to find anything.

That led on to scanning several documents for electronic storage and kept me busy until tea-time.

Tuesday, 20th September 2022

We walked round to the Emmanuel Centre on Longsight Road so that Jenny could pay for two car boot pitches, one for her and one for her friend, Gwen, for the sale in October. Unfortunately, Jenny had swapped handbags and not put her cash in the new one. The lady with whom we spoke, Jo, had already reserved two places for Jenny from a previous encounter and said not to worry, we could pay on the day, despite the circular requested cash in advance.

We thanked Jo and left to walk up to the post office, where I sent off the surplus equipment I had packaged up yesterday, to BT.

We returned home for lunch and I picked up a copy of the Radio Times from the local store on the way.

While resting after my lunch, I started work on the programme schedules for next week, deciding what to record. Jenny would be going through the Radio Times as well and adding her list of items to mine.

I left off to have a look at the new skirting in the back bedroom and I started preparing it for gluing to the walls. That involved packing where necessary and making the corners, made difficult by the walls not being as flat as they should be and the corners being way out of true. I glued all the packing in place and left it to set.

I resumed work on the TV listings until tea-time.

Wednesday, 21st September 2021

After breakfast and pot washing, I used the NHS application on my iPhone for the first time to order another batch of Statins, which the doctor had finally persuaded me to take and I telephoned Finney's garage to book the car in yet again for the diesel leak under the bonnet.

I went to work on the back bedroom skirting and it was all glued in place before noon. I left the glue to set before filling in the gaps at the top of the skirting where needed due to the walls not being flat.

I washed up the baking bowls and utensils Jenny had used making another batch of gluten-free bread and sat down for a short rest, giving me a few minutes to catch up on my diary entry and my e-mails.

After lunch, I cut the first piece of coving for the bedroom cupboard. That seemed to go well. Working in the cupboard was not easy.

I packed up for the day and had a shower.

Thursday, 22nd September 2022

Having booked the car in at Finney's garage on Monday and taken another look at the patch of diesel on the drive, I decided to give the AA a call for someone to come and have a look at it while it was standing idle on the drive. I didn't want to drive it any distance if the leak was getting worse and we planned on a shopping trip to Unicorn and Waitrose tomorrow. My hope was that the AA chap could at least provide a temporary fix.

The AA chap arrived at around 10 a.m. and fixed the diesel leak in less than a quarter of an hour. The drain tap on the bottom of the fuel filter had worked loose and was allowing fuel to leak onto the chassis. That, in itself, would do no harm. It was just expensive! At least there would be no need to take it into the garage on Monday now.

I was on the telephone to ward F2 at North Manchester General Hospital at the time the AA chap arrived, so Jenny dealt with him while I discussed my catheter removal.

My records had details of my review in eight weeks' time from my last consultation and I would be receiving a letter to that effect. There was no mention of my catheter removal. That I had to arrange with the district nursing team and I was advised that was best done through my GP. I put in an AskMyGP request to that effect and suggested that my GP sorted out any issues directly with the hospital ward. What an organisation shambles. How would someone with less initiative cope with this situation, left in limbo, not knowing what to do? It seemed that education today was lacking in communication skills, people being totally unaware of what other people needed to know and making sure they understood who was doing what and when.

The moral here was to trust no-one, regardless of who they appeared to be, verify everything you were told in as many ways as possible and double-check everything to make sure you had missed nothing.

I spent the rest of the morning in the back bedroom, the first job being to fill in the gaps between the top of the new skirting and the walls with more "No More Nails" adhesive. That went well enough, except my third tube of adhesive ran out and the rest of the filling would have to wait until the week end.

I tidied up the room a little and then gave Jenny some help to work through the car boot stock she had stored in the room in readiness for the sale on 8th October.

We stopped for lunch at about 1 p.m.

I scanned some more paperwork and I lit the wood-burner in the lounge since it was starting to turn cold.

Friday, 23rd September 2022

We went grocery shopping to Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheth. We did not return home until late afternoon, having been delayed by heavy traffic on the M60 motorway, school traffic as we approached Bury and roadworks in Bury.

Jenny wanted to call at the chemist in Greenmount, so we came back along Brandlesholme Road rather than through Tottington, which would have avoided the prolonged roadworks on the former route, that being shorter and normally much quicker. On this occasion, that was most certainly not the case.

I finished off the TV recordings for the coming week by searching the TV guide for the various series in which we were interested.

Saturday, 24 September 2022

We were at the old school for most of the day, working on the electrical jumble in readiness for the table-top sale next week.

Jenny had taken a packed lunch, which enabled us to carry on until mid-afternoon.

We returned home to find the new LED light to replace the fluorescent tube in the cooker-hood had arrived and I decided to clean the cooker hood around the fitting prior to installing the new tube. What I hadn't expected was that I also needed to replace the starter, which made perfect sense when I thought about it.

Fortunately, the starter was easily accessed, being located in the top of the tube recess. Removing the old one was far easier than inserting the new one for the LED tube and it took some time. I ended up having to sit on the cooker hob in order to manoeuvre the new starter into place. Fitting the tube was easy and it worked! Putting the glass cover back on was a trifle fiddly but that was nothing new; I had removed it for cleaning before.

I turned my attention to the TV recordings for this coming week and programmed the ones for tonight.

I started tidying up the programmes we had watched.

Sunday, 25th September 2022

I finished tidying up the programmes we had watched, finished putting in the recording schedule for this week and edited the latest recordings, ready for viewing.

I dealt with my backlog of e-mails, one of which was from Greenpeace, stating the obvious about the recent catastrophic "mini-budget" and plans to relax a whole series of environmental controls from our Glorious Conservative Government. I responded to Greenpeace with my comments.

“What we have here is a Government of the rich, by the rich, for the rich. This budget and the proposed environmental changes will only accelerate the rate at which we are destroying this planet and, ultimately, ourselves.

It is imperative we continue to fight these ludicrous proposals and I am sure Greenpeace will do its best to do so.

What we need is a Government that will put people before profit and we aren't going to get that for a couple of years or so. Let us hope that people then have the good sense to remove these financial, power-hungry bullies from power.”

There was only one word to describe this Government – EVIL. They were intent on putting our society back a good 350 years.

In the middle of all my frenzied, armchair activity, I broke off to clean the glass front of the wood-burner in readiness for a fire later and I took the plants in the conservatory outside for Jenny to tidy up, including ridding the Basil of an infestation of whitefly aphids.

I even found time to update and reconcile the accounts. With the recent financial upheaval and soaring cost of living, which the Government thought, as daft as it sounded, it could control by giving the rich even more money, I had started developing a monthly plan of income and expenditure.

I backed up my documents too.

Monday, 26th September 2022

We took the trailer-load of rubbish to the tip and came home for lunch.

After lunch, I spent more time than I should have done on this week's Radio Times crossword, which I was finding more difficult than usual.

I dealt with a few e-mails and had more problems with a new recurring event not appearing in the reminders window of Outlook 365, for which I reported another incident to Microsoft.

I helped Jenny sort a couple of things in the garage prior to the car boot sale on 8th October and we put the trailer away.

I finally managed to remember to tighten up the door knob on the lounge door to the dining room. It had been loose for a while.

Lorna popped round for a chat and she had a coffee as we had our usual cup of tea in the late afternoon.

Going into the garage to fetch some potatoes for tea, I inspected the coving to make sure it was still alright. It was then I realised that the four 3m lengths of coving were 100mm wide and not 127mm as ordered and as on the invoice.

I sent an e-mail to Travis Perkins to ask them to quickly replace the 100mm lengths with 127mm lengths.

This was yet another example of today's slipshod practices where people just couldn't manage to perform tasks properly. Quality of Service had been replaced by Cost of Service, putting profit before customer satisfaction.

Tuesday, 27th September 2022

This was the day I was supposed to have my catheter removed and be taught how to perform self-catheterisation.

I telephoned the District Nursing Team and a very helpful Sister returned my call. She found my referral and she eventually confirmed it was requested for today, the date being tucked away at the very bottom of the message. That was the good news.

The bad news is that the referral had gone to the wrong team. Apparently, it should have gone to the Incontinence Team. Why one team could not pass it on to another was shrouded in mystery. I was asked to contact my GP to have the referral directed to the correct team. You may need to be reminded that the nurse at the hospital with whom I spoke about this did say I should ask my GP to refer this to the District Nursing Team.

Between my call and the response, we had set off walking down to catch the bus to Ramsbottom. I had taken my mobile phone, on which I could answer calls to both it and the house phone, expecting one from the District Nursing Team. We had timed our walk with the intention of catching the 10:06 bus. The last thing my phone told me before the battery died on the way was that it was 10:09. I asked Jenny if she had brought her charger with her, thinking I could breathe life back into my phone on the 10:26 bus. She said she hadn't. To make matters worse, she hadn't brought her phone with her, so if anyone did call, we wouldn't know or be able to speak to them.

We decided not to hang around for a good fifteen minutes, waiting for the next bus, to spend the morning incommunicado in Ramsbottom. We came home and that is where I received the return call.

After that, we took the car into Ramsbottom, stopping off at the surgery to ask our GP, very nicely, to refer my request to the Incontinence Team, explaining the situation. The lady with whom I spoke said she would deal with the matter.

In Ramsbottom, we bought some greetings cards from the excellent card shop and toured the charity shops that were open, where I found nothing of interest. Jenny bought a little something for Rachel.

Jenny had intended nipping into Plentiful for a couple of items but it was closed on Tuesdays.

This was turning out not to be one of our better days.

We finished off with a stroll round the aisles of Morrison's small shop, where Jenny bought a few items.

On the way home, we called to see our friends, Lynn and John, it being Lynn's birthday tomorrow. As we arrived, I received a call from the Incontinence team in the person of Debbie. She said she had received the request and made arrangements to remove my catheter tomorrow at 7:30 a.m. She would then come back in the afternoon to check my urine flow and retention, teaching me to self-catheterise if necessary, until my next review with the consultant, in six weeks' time, for which I was yet to receive the formal appointment.

I was impressed with the speed with which my problem had been resolved and very grateful to all concerned, even if I did have to manage it all myself.

The lesson here was to never expect people to do what they were supposed to do when they were supposed to do it. Instead, if you wanted something to happen, you had to make sure it was going to happen and to make sure it was going to happen when it should. The way to do that was to talk to those performing the task, or those responsible for ensuring the task was done and to make sure whatever needed doing was going to be done on time.

We stayed chatting with Lynn, John having to leave us, for longer than we had intended and we came home for a late afternoon meal that should have been lunch.

I had a call from Andrew at Travis Perkins. He had read my e-mail and said he would deal with the matter, which would take a couple of days. I said that was fine and thanked him for his help.

And now it was time for a fire for another cosy evening of watching old films and series recorded from TV broadcasts after tea.

Wednesday, 28th September 2022

I was up before 7 a.m., put the heating on and prepared for my ordeal by catheter at 7:30, waiting patiently in my dressing gown and pyjamas for the nurse to call.

I put the heating on since it was quite cool so early in the morning. The boiler exhaust seemed to affect the new outside light sensor even though I had moved it well away from the vent. The patio lights came on, or at least two of them did. The third one that was troublesome before didn't. This was yet another challenge. I had been thinking of replacing the lamp anyway, since it was quite weatherworn and having a go at renovating the old one but it was a question of time. Having used the fire recently, I needed to cut some wood and I wanted to try to progress the coving in the back bedroom, although I couldn't do that until the proper 3 metre lengths had been delivered.

While waiting, I dealt with a couple of e-mails and updated my bug report in outlook 365 whereby recurring events were not showing in the reminders window. I was getting fed up with Office 365 bugs, the one in excel where cells in one sheet greyed themselves out when I switched to it from another sheet in the same file. It didn't lose any data; it was just a display issue. If I approached the same sheet from a different sheet in the same file, it was fine. I was seriously thinking of going back to an old version of Microsoft Office that worked properly and that was less complicated. I didn't think much of Windows 10 either, preferring Windows 7. In my opinion, both were a retrograde step.

There was a lovely sunrise, with a pale blue sky.

The nurse, Debbie, arrived on time and the catheter removal took all of 30 seconds. It surprised her to find the catheter had a sort of hooked tip which was used when access to the bladder from the urethra was obstructed slightly, apparently often due to an enlarged prostate. I said I hadn't a clue why it was used in my case. The doctor didn't mention it to me and I was assuming she had used whatever she had to hand at the time.

I was given a sheet on which I was to record my fluid input and output for the day and Debbie said she would be back later this afternoon to check my urine retention. Meanwhile, if I had any problems, she left her mobile number for me to call her.

Debbie left and we had an early breakfast.

I went out to sort out the large strawberry bed and I moved a few plants, complete with runners, into the small bed between the large one and the herb bed since we were unlikely to use it for anything else and Jenny wanted more strawberries.

We had lunch at midday for a change since we were up at the crack of dawn and I went into the back bedroom cupboard to try to fill the gauges in the ceiling, from removing the textured paint, with Polyfilla, since I couldn't get hold of a plasterer. That was sort of successful, which is more than could be said for my attempts to pass water.

After consuming 1¾ litres of fluid, I managed to produce about 5 ml of my bodily fluid. I telephoned Debbie to let her know and she said she would be with me shortly.

Having run out of both filler and enthusiasm, I gave up, washed my implements and settled down to continue going through the TV listings for next week, a task I had started yesterday evening and to which I had given some time while my lunch settled.

Debbie returned, sorted me out with some disposable catheters and taught me how to use them. That wasn't as bad as it might sound and it served its purpose. She left me with a large enough supply to last me until she could arrange for an order to be delivered. I was to let Debbie know when I needed more and there was a two week lead time.

Debbie was very good and said I could call her if I needed any advice or help. She said she would call me tomorrow to see how I was managing.

Thursday, 29th September 2022

I finished off the TV listings and started to scan the downloaded schedules for series we watched to make sure I hadn't missed any.

I had a Civic Society meeting at the old school at 7 p.m.

Friday, 30th September 2022

We went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's store at Heaton Park and Tesco in Prestwich. I arranged with Mike, just down the road, to take in my delivery of catheters that I had been notified would arrive today, should they be delivered while we were out.

We called at B&Q on the way to Sainsbury's store for some Polyfilla, No More Nails adhesive and Superglue. I was also going to buy some more weedkiller but it wasn't really the time of year to be using it, so I didn't bother.

Jenny had arranged to collect her glasses from Specsavers inside Sainsbury's store. Her glasses were not ready. Nobody had bothered to let us know they wouldn't be available today.

When we returned home, the 127 coving had been delivered and left on the drive. Fortunately, they were under the car port so they didn't get that wet in the heavy rain. The 100 coving that should have been collected was still locked in the garage.

We moved the coving into the garage, alongside the other two lots and Jenny stored away all the groceries. I finished off the scanning of the TV schedules.

After a late lunch, I started to schedule the recordings for the coming week.

Peter came to fit a new washer seal to the cistern in the toilet. That helped matters but there was still some leakage. We decided to leave it for now and see if it settled down.

I let Andrew at Travis Perkins know he needed to arrange for the collection of the 100 coving.