

Greenmount – April 2016

It was almost a carbon copy of last year. Once again March had come in like a lion and gone out like one, invalidating the old saying yet again.

Friday April 1<sup>st</sup>: Another grocery shopping day loomed and it was the longer one with an outing on the M60 to Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath, the two locations linked by the main A56, the old, very busy road to Chester. The journey was not helped by the road works at the junction approaching Broadheath, which, when finished, will add a second, straight-on lane on the return carriageway through the junction, allowing twice as much congestion. The seemingly, never-ending road works on the M60 didn't help either. When completed, these were designed to add an extra lane in both directions, thereby dispensing with the hard shoulder, turning the three-lane car park into a four-lane car park, especially when something breaks down. How much is our minister of transport paid, again?

The weather forecast for the following day, the day of the Old School Collector's fair and, more importantly, the Car Boot Sale in the school yard which we were managing, was not good, with persistent heavy rain until lunchtime. We decided not to bother packing the car and to reserve our strength for the Sunday morning at Ramsbottom, being the first sale of the season, when the weather looked marginally better.

Saturday April 2<sup>nd</sup>: We were up at 5 a.m. Being a Car Boot Day, true to form, it was raining, although not as heavy as forecast and, what's more, the Met Office had not updated the forecast to reflect the present conditions. We decided it wasn't worth trying to set up our stall in the wet since most of our goods would not survive. We had enough in similar conditions last year. We did go round to the Old School for 7 a.m. in case any brave soul did decide to turn up. Two did and one actually set out his stall and paid his £8 site fee. He was selling potted plants and they appreciated the rain. He did make enough to cover his costs by the time we decided to come home at about 9:30.

The weather forecast for Sunday had been updated and rain was forecast just in time for us setting up our stall. I thought somebody had taken a dislike to us.

I spent the morning and the early part of the afternoon tidying up my temporary folder on the computer. That was where I dumped all the bits and pieces that needed some attention and to which I was not able to allocate my time when the information was acquired. That resulted in three updates to my web site and one to the village web site as well as sorting items into their appropriate folders so I could find the data again.

I also brought Matthew's old tower system back to life, it having laid dormant for a few weeks. Computers tended to become a trifle upset if they were neglected for weeks on end and this one needed to perform a few updates to bring itself back up to speed.

And then I fell asleep for an hour.

Sunday April 3<sup>rd</sup>: The first car boot sale of the season in Ramsbottom was devoid of our presence (a) because rain was forecast around setting up time and (b) Jenny wasn't feeling well enough to pack the car the previous evening and had not recovered by the morning.

We rose late, showered and had breakfast, by which time the sun was shining. We decided to deliver the latest village newsletter since someone had dropped the pack through our door the previous Sunday. Before we ventured out, we saw our neighbour across the back, Sylvia, struggling with a gap in her eaves. There's nothing worse than having a gap in your eaves.

She had a problem with rats in her loft and the exterminator said he thought this was their point of entry and exit. Having failed to find any tradesman interested in blocking up the hole, she had asked Jenny the previous week if I would take a look at it and I hadn't had chance to do so. There was no time like the present, I thought.

After spending a good while examining the gap, taking various measurements and thinking how best to tackle the problem, I commenced shaping a piece of wood that would cover the hole and that would also provide additional support for the UPVC cladding. After several trips to and fro to refine the cuts, I finally fitted the new piece of wood and refitted the UPVC around 3 p.m. Time for lunch, I thought.

After a short rest, we resurrected plan B and delivered the latest issue of [Greenmount Voice](#).

Returning home about 4:15 p.m., I fired up Jenny's laptop. This must have been one of those rare occasions when a computer had not been on during the day. I decided it was time to update this diary of events and undertake one or two other IT chores before settling down to our usual evening of tea and watching recorded TV programmes and/or DVDs.

Sylvia kindly popped round with a gift for my hard work in lieu of the cash I refused to take.

Monday April 4<sup>th</sup>: The plan after breakfast was to clean out the fire after we last used it some weeks ago. That was postponed while I decided to look on the Internet for some new rubber floor mats for the front of the car, the local VW dealer having told me they were no longer available from VW.

Having spent about half an hour trying to discover whether the car was a Golf Mark 4 or a Golf mark 5, I finally found that the code 1J, the seventh and eighth characters of the Vehicle Identification Number (or VIN), meant it was a mark 4. Why VW could not simply have put Mark 4 in the vehicle data in the service booklet is beyond me. In any case, I would have thought that IV would have been more appropriate.

I could not find any decent, proper VW rubber mats and I decided to send VW an E-mail asking for help in locating some.

I started on the fire and finished the stove and the tiled hearth before lunch. I resumed work on the set of tools we kept in the hearth and finished those before Jenny needed my help to rescue some herb plants from the Incredible Edible plot.

Donna had decided not to grow herbs this year since there seemed to be no demand for them and suggested that if we wanted any, we should help ourselves before the raised bed was cleared for vegetables this year. We brought back four plants for our raised beds, put them in and fertilised the bed.

I resumed my cleaning, tackling the mirror above the fire surround and the wooden surround itself, cleaning all the ornaments on the mantle piece and finishing off with the candle snuffer. That was interrupted by Jenny again, this time to help her measure out some milk for a cake she was baking. She had broken her small measuring jug a few weeks earlier and had not yet replaced it. Her large one was not graduated at the level she needed and it required a keen eye and some skilful guesswork.

The fire finished, I would have turned my attention to the TV to clean the screen but it was in use – not by me or Jenny, I might add – so I decided to give my fingers some exercise on the PC keyboard.

Tuesday April 5<sup>th</sup>: The day started early, or, at least, ours did. We were up just after 7 a.m. and giving Rachel a lift to work after she had dropped her car off at the garage for a service. We took the opportunity of our visit to Bury to buy a few extra groceries, first from the Health Food Shop in the market hall and then from Tesco. On the way to the market, we popped into W H Smith for a browse and Jenny ended up buying two gluten-free cookery books. The trip turned out to be a tad more expensive than anticipated.

We stored away the groceries at home and hooked up the trailer to fetch some wood from a tree that some friends of ours had chopped down. The bits had been left in a heap in the garden with the foliage still attached and the whole pile was topped with a huge piece of the trunk that would have taken at least three world-champion-class weight-lifters to move. Either that or a crane. With our friend's help, we managed to free some substantial branches and we recovered two trailer loads, one before lunch and one after lunch. I had to remove the smaller branches and greenery before storing the useful pieces under the car port, which took some time and I finished about 6 p.m. after a trip to Bury to collect Rachel to pick up her car. We managed to slip in a trip with the trailer to the tip to dump some rubbish during this latter jaunt.

I rounded off the evening with a refreshing beer before tea. And why not?

Wednesday April 6<sup>th</sup>: I had planned to go walking with Mike, Frank and Steve, even in the rain. Unfortunately, Jenny's niece, Tracey had been taken into hospital again and this was the only day Jenny had available to go to see her. So we made our way over the Pennines in the rain and hail showers to the Northern General Hospital. Tracey was not well and was awaiting more tests to resolve her problem. She was pleased to see us and, since we arrived late, having stopped for lunch on the old road on the hilltops leading from the roundabout at the bottom of the Woodhead Pass towards Wortley, with magnificent views of the valley in the brief period of sunshine, we stayed on past the end of official visiting time. The nursing staff were good natured and did not seem to mind.

We called at the Beefeater at Heaton Park for tea, somewhat earlier than usual for this kind of trip and made it home in good time to give the cat her daily tablet at 9 p.m. for which she was extremely grateful.

Thursday April 7<sup>th</sup>: I started the day with an update to the village web site and then dealt with the planned delivery of top soil for the Incredible Edible plot on the coming Tuesday. The first task was to obtain permission from the manager of the Toby Carvery to allow the

people who normally park by the plot to park on the pub car park across the road on the day of delivery to allow the lorry access. The second step was to draft a letter to the local residents and businesses in the vicinity asking them nicely not to park there over Monday night and Tuesday morning and I sent that to our village Chairman for approval.

VW having responded to my E-mail about the car mats confirming what the local dealership had told me, I decided to look online for some replacement mats again and after much searching of the Internet, found an excellent web site, <http://www.carmats.london/volkswagen-golf-mk4-estate-1998-2004/>. I decided to go and check the shape of the mats just to be on the safe side and I removed the driver's side mat to compare it with the picture on the web site. That seemed fine.

Since the set of mats I was going to order was for the front and rear and I was ordering the heavy-duty rubber variety, I decided to check the rear mats. It was then that I discovered not only were the existing rear mats fabric ones, but the rear passenger-side mat was also soaking wet and so was the carpet underneath. I was at a complete loss to understand how it had got in such a condition and I removed it to allow both it and the carpet to dry out.

The mat I placed in the conservatory in front of the dehumidifier, which I soon discovered was a huge mistake as water started to run off the mat and form a large pool on the tiled floor. I invoked Plan B and hung it on the line outside to drip dry. I then mopped up the conservatory floor and all the drips in the kitchen and hall that I had only just noticed.

The mat stayed outside until the unscheduled heavy rain and hail shower, by which time it was dry enough to place in the original position in the conservatory.

It occurred to me that it was a good job the Germans were better at making U-boats than they were at making cars. I put the ordering of new mats on hold since it could soon be time to order a new car. A VW? I very much doubt it. Not unless it came with eight gears – six forward, one reverse and one scuba.

Friday April 8<sup>th</sup>: We went grocery shopping to Prestwich, visiting Village Greens and Tesco and we were home for lunch. I spent the afternoon sorting out my E-mail and trying to communicate with the Sony HD Video recorder that came into the Old School jumble without a remote control. I resorted to borrowing a universal remote control that I kept in my box of test equipment at the Old School without success. I was beginning to suspect that the remote control receiver on the Sony recorder was faulty and I decided to shelve the problem for a while longer.

Saturday April 9<sup>th</sup>: I was at Matthew and Carrie's house for 9:30, helping Matthew install lighting in his loft. We eventually located a main feed for the lighting circuit in the spaghetti junction of cables, inserted another junction box and proceeded to cable up the switch for the new lights and the first light fitting. That was after turning off the lighting circuit power, of course, otherwise the bulb on the end of the extension lead plugged into the power circuit would not have been the only item glowing in the dark.

Meanwhile, Jenny had a busy morning at the hair salon and delivering some notices I had prepared earlier to local residents and businesses in the vicinity of the village Incredible

Edible plot warning them of the soil delivery on the coming Tuesday.

I had lunch with Matthew and Carrie and left Matthew to finish off in the loft as I came home only to retrace my tyre tracks and travel on to Manchester to put Rachel's shower back together. The job itself took all of fifteen minutes and we made our way home for tea.

I was too tired to pack the car for the following day's car boot sale in Ramsbottom and I rested until tea was ready and afterwards long enough to let it settle before lifting and loading.

Sunday April 10<sup>th</sup>: We arrived at Ramsbottom at 6:45 a.m. and the station car park was already quite busy with car-booters setting up their stalls. We had left sunny (for a change) Greenmount and descended into the misty valley so it was still quite dull and damp as we started to put our tables together. The sun soon burnt off the mist and it turned out to be a most pleasant day, the sale of an old computer boosting our coffers considerably, although trading was very slow and steady for the most part. We were home for about 4 p.m., somewhat later than usual and I was surprised how much room there was in the car after we had packed up, the boot having been full to the brim when we set off. We must have sold quite a lot, although it didn't seem like it. When Jenny counted the takings, I was surprised how much there was.

I spent what was left of the day checking out the computer I had sold and prepared it for delivery the following morning. That burst into life immediately and was fine, except that it needed a few updates.

Monday April 11<sup>th</sup>: We unpacked the car from the previous day and then set off to deliver the computer I had sold. Even with an A to Z of Bury, the place took some finding, the lack of street signs not helping.

When we came home, I spent the rest of the day cutting the grass on the side of the house. It was quite windy but at least the sun kept popping out and it didn't rain. This being the first cut of the year, it was hard going and by the time I had finished, I was feeling somewhat stiff in all the wrong places.

Tuesday April 12<sup>th</sup>: I was at the Old School for 8 a.m., collecting the parking cones, or, to be precise, the no-parking cones, to cordon off the unmade road on the approach to the Incredible Edible plot.

I arrived at the plot and put the cones across the entrance to prevent people from parking their cars to leave the area clear for the soil delivery expected at 9 a.m. The letter I had issued had worked well and only one car remained in the area and it was not causing an obstruction, which was fortunate, because one of its tyres was completely flat and the vehicle looked as though it had been abandoned.

In the event, Donna arrived before the soil, the latter turning up at about 9:30. The chap delivering it apologised for being late, which was not really a problem and, by the time he had unloaded the two bags, Dave Archer had arrived too. Dave and I barrowed the soil to the plot and levelled it. Dave also performed some weeding and I left Donna, Dave and

Tracey, who arrived just before I left at about 11:45 for lunch with Jenny at 12:00. Jenny wanted lunch early as she had swapped her usual Thursday afternoon Yoga session to Tuesday since we were heading for Whitby for a week the following day.

I went round to the Old School with Jenny, not that I had taken up Yoga, but because Christine had asked me to take a look at the Old School telephone. The payphone had developed a crackle when in use and BT, having tested the line, said they could not find a fault. It didn't take me long to establish that there was a line fault and, with advice from John Seddon, an ex-BT engineer, we deduced that the most likely cause was water seeping into a joint somewhere along the line. My guess was that it was the DP on the pole outside the Old School and, when I came home, I told BT as much, once I had established vocal communication with someone in the correct department. Finding the correct department was not easy and the helpful chap with whom I eventually spoke was not strictly in the section I required but he said he would pass on the call to the appropriate person for me. Life used to be much simpler before privatisation and one could simply dial 151.

The result of my efforts was that a BT engineer would call at the Old School between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. the following day and BT would charge if they found no fault. I subsequently learnt that the engineer did find a fault on the line (now, there's a surprise) and he said it was probably due to the pair of wires shorting out intermittently somewhere between the Old School and the exchange.

That was enough excitement for one day.

Wednesday April 13<sup>th</sup>: We set off for Whitby via Tesco in Bury to top up the car with fuel and had a very pleasant journey that left bright sunshine in Bury and ended up in rain with an overcast sky. Usually it was the other way round. If we holidayed in Ethiopia it would pour down. I mused that we should hire ourselves out as rainmakers.

After a long chat with our landlady, Jill, we potted round Whitby and paid a quick visit to the Tourist Information (TI) office for a bus timetable before it closed and made our way to the Duke of York for tea. The pub was not as good as it used to be; a couple of years or so ago, I had described it as the best pub in Whitby. This seemed no longer to be the case and that, I was told, was because it had changed ownership.

Thursday April 14<sup>th</sup>: The first port of call was the TI office for another bus timetable. The old bus service that ran from Scarborough up the coast road to Middlesboro had been replaced by one that ran inland through Guisborough and the coast road north of Whitby was now served by a new route from Whitby to Middlesboro.

We strolled along the beach to Sandsend, using the causeway for the middle section because the tide had not receded enough to expose the sand. Sandsend was the subject of coastal repairs and the only other place I had seen so much heavy, earth-moving equipment in one place was in Christchurch, New Zealand a few years earlier. We lunched at the Sandside café, which, I am pleased to report, was as good as ever.

We walked back along the Cleveland Way, considering purchasing a static caravan. The mobile home site opposite the golf course only had touring caravans and vehicles so we gave

that a miss.

We did pass a “bungalow” that was for sale and, back in Whitby, we called at the estate agents for a brochure. It was grossly overpriced at offers above £350,000, having a kitchen in which there was not enough room to swing a cat and no garage. Two of the four bedrooms were on a constructed upper floor and there was only one bathroom (for four bedrooms?). There was a second loo, though. The so-called “bungalow” did have a sea view across the road at the front and backed onto the local cricket field but it was sandwiched by three-storey hotels on either side. Essentially, it needed knocking down and rebuilding.

We potted round Whitby again and had tea at the Angel, a Wetherspoons pub. I have to say that it had much improved and the meal was fine. I could only assume that somebody had read my scathing blog from our last experience there.

Friday April 15<sup>th</sup>: It promised to be a reasonable walking day (how wrong can one be?) and we caught the bus to Redcar. We alighted at the bus stop at the end of the road we took to my sister’s house when we last walked up the coast to [Redcar from Skinningrove](#) and continued our coastal walk northwards into Redcar. We found a delightful and excellent café at the north end of the promenade called [Daisy Mae’s Vintage Tea Room](#) that served a selection of gluten-free items, including sandwiches.

After lunch, we headed up the promenade, keeping by the sea wall and took what seemed to be a track along the sand dunes. This soon proved to be too much for us and we descended to the beach and followed that up and round much of the way to the end of the southern breakwater at the mouth of the Tees. As we did so, the rain started and we donned our waterproof trousers.

We cut across the dunes to the road leading to the breakwater, by which time the rain was persistent to say the least. I managed a couple of photographs at the farthest point we could reach on the breakwater, the land to the end being fenced off and private, before it became too wet and we headed back along the road.

The end of the road had been used as a rubbish dump and litter was strewn about all along the road. Clearly, visitors to the area had no respect for the environment and the local council obviously didn’t care. It seemed a shame, because the beach seemed lovely, if somewhat exposed and the dunes and the lagoons they encompassed were a nature reserve. The backdrop of the now closed Tata Steel plant and the heavy industry across the Tees did nothing to improve the vista and it was not a place most people would want to visit.

Heading back, we passed the Tata Steel plant and took the footpath across Cleveland Golf Course, turning sharp right to follow a track on the edge of the golf course, by the sand dunes, which brought us back into Redcar.

We reached the bus stop at the clock tower, soaking wet, with five minutes to spare before the bus came to take us back to Whitby.

Back in Whitby, we piled into Wetherspoons again for tea and went back to our accommodation to dry off.

Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup>: The day continued where the previous one had finished, except that the rain occasionally turned solid and we were pelted with chunks of ice. To be fair, it wasn't as persistent, coming in showers with the odd sunny period.

We climbed the "199" steps, which I counted and reached 201. We visited St. Mary's Church before descending into town again to tour the charity shops and to take a quick look at the RC Church in the vicinity.

We lunched at the Monk's Haven café on Church Street, another establishment to which I had previously given the thumbs down and which I am again pleased to report, had improved considerably. In fact, our meal was very good and, surprisingly, there was a good choice of gluten-free food.

We had tea at Trenchers Restaurant, which was also good.

Sunday April 17<sup>th</sup>: We walked up the "199" steps again. I counted them again and totalled 203. Either somebody had mysteriously added a couple or my calculations were slightly adrift.

We followed the Cleveland Way along the cliff top, our intention being to make enquiries at the Saltwick Bay Caravan site about static caravans. After obtaining costs and recovering from the shock, we ate at the site café. Not only was the food good and reasonably priced but there was a good selection of gluten-free food yet again.

After lunch, we set off to walk to Robin Hood's Bay. The five and a half miles took us nearly five hours. The recent heavy rain had turned much of the path into the kind of environment more appreciated by a hippopotamus. To describe it as muddy would be an understatement. The steep descents were nothing short of treacherous and the steep ascents difficult on those with steps and almost impossible on those without them. On two of the slopes, it was necessary to kick foot holds into the banking in order to make progress upwards. How people managed coming down them in the opposite direction was evident from the amount of mud on their jeans, particularly their backsides. I fell down twice but fortunately the ground broke my fall. Jenny slipped and slid several times but managed to stay upright. In the event, it was she who sustained a muscle injury to her left side while I escaped unhurt, or so I thought. My gloves still bore the scars (well, mud) even after several rinses in water a week later.

We caught the 5:30 p.m. bus back to Whitby after scraping off as much mud as we could from our boots using a stick that was lying around the bus stop before boarding. In Whitby, we made our way to our lodgings to change, leaving our boots in the car and we had tea, once more, at the Angel (Wetherspoons).

Monday April 18<sup>th</sup>: We drove over to the Black Bull caravan site near Pickering to meet up with Gwen and Frank and take a look at their very nice, roomy and comfortable static caravan. Frank and his son, Peter, had made an excellent job of the decking around the caravan, giving them more living space.

We lunched with them at the garden centre, a short walk up the road and had a look at a

couple of other sites in the area on the return stroll.

We left about 5 p.m. and had no trouble finding a parking spot outside [The Lansbury](#) B&B.

We had tea at Moutrey's Italian restaurant, which was as good as ever and had an early night, still feeling the effects of the previous day.

Tuesday April 19<sup>th</sup>: Plan A was to catch the steam train (North Yorkshire Moors Railway) to Goathland (Aidensfield) and potter round there for the day. Unfortunately we had omitted to obtain a timetable and by the time we arrived at the station (10:30 a.m.), the first train of the day had long gone (10:00 a.m.) the next train was not until 12:45, which was utterly useless given that it took over an hour to travel to Goathland and the last return train was at 16:00.

Plan B was to go to the gift shop at the Abbey to see if they had a T-shirt for Rachel. I counted the "199" steps again and reached 200. I decided to give up trying to work out if the 199 was correct or not.

The gift shop did not have any T-shirts. We suggested they should have and left. We lunched at the Monk's Haven in Church Street again and, since it was a nice day, we decided to wander out on the east breakwater and we spent some time fascinated by the waves breaking on the rocks as the tide came in. Jenny was splashed as she posed for a picture and refused to risk a further drenching. Instead, I took some pictures of the waves crashing on the rocks and received a left shoe full of sea water as a wave rolled up the slipway faster than I could move.

That was followed by more wandering around the dock and a stroll up to the marina looking at sailing yachts for sale.

We had tea for the first time ever at the Magpie Café and very nice it was too. Jenny's fish and her chips were both fried in separate, gluten-free oil, the fish being coated in gluten-free batter.

After that, we retired for an early night, preparing for the journey home the following day.

Wednesday April 20<sup>th</sup>: We went up Church Street to a shop called Lemon and Lime to purchase a T-shirt we had seen for Rachel. When we had called the previous day, at 12:30, the shop was closed. When we called back at 15:30, the lady was just locking up and was not about to let us in and serve us. Fortunately, the shop was open on this occasion and the young lady who served us was very nice, which made a nice change from the miserable soul we had encountered previously.

That task completed, we made our way to Redcar to see my sister, Barbara. We went off to Daisy Mae's Vintage Tea Room for lunch and then back to Barbara's bungalow, where her daughter, Julie was helping with the gardening. We ran through the photographs I had taken of the holiday and then left for home about 4 p.m.

The journey home took us nearly three hours owing to heavy traffic around Leeds on the

M62. We had a near miss when a driver in front of us slowed down and I decided to move to the lane on my right just as a vehicle from the right of that lane decided to move to the left without indicating and then slowed down as well. I jammed on the breaks and was pleased that I had recently renewed all four tyres and that it was dry.

We had a very nice tea at the Swan and Cemetary in Bury.

Thursday April 21<sup>st</sup>: I spent the morning cutting the back lawn and the afternoon making a pair of large, wooden wedges to hold open the patio doors at the back of the garage.

Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup>: We motored down to Unicorn and on to Waitrose to stock up our empty fridge and food cupboard. The journey down was fine. The journey back was slow because, once again, the majority of drivers simply did not know how to drive in heavy traffic.

Saturday April 23<sup>rd</sup>: The morning started well. I cut the grass on the side of the house and intended to strim the edges, clean out the garage gutter, cut back the ivy, tidy up the borders back and front and cut and strim the front lawn. Unfortunately, it turned dull and cold and started to rain so I stayed in and updated my web site with the [holiday pictures](#).

Jenny had asked me to turn off the heating in the morning. Having done so, I lit a fire about 3:30 p.m. and decided to update this blog.

Sunday April 24<sup>th</sup>: This was a day of administration, dealing with paperwork, updating items on the computer and updating the village web site. The Tottington web site also needed updating but I was too shattered and it was almost teatime when I had finished.

Monday April 25<sup>th</sup>: It was a day of activity as I cleaned out the fire and lit one in the early afternoon which was burning until we went to bed. The wood being free, it was cheaper than using the central heating, which we had disabled.

I also attempted another repair of an accessory to one of Rachel's old Sindy Toys prior to selling. The plastic bridle for the plastic horse had broken at a right-angle of one of the nose straps and gluing it was tricky. Bing a stress point, I was not confident it would hold and it didn't the first time I tried it. Still, nothing ventured....

That was followed by a good clean, polish and tidy of the lounge.

Tuesday April 26<sup>th</sup>: We continued our cleaning spree and concentrated on the dining room. That was interrupted by a decision to move Matthew's old tower system up into the back bedroom to record activity at the back on the webcam when we were out. We were trying to find out who was setting off our house alarm by throwing items at the window and we thought we had an idea who was responsible. This would provide the necessary proof if we were right.

As usual, one job led to several others and we ended up performing a minor spit and polish job on the back bedroom before I moved the equipment from the lounge.

Tidying out and lighting the fire ended a day of frenzied activity, at least, for me. Jenny

cooked tea as usual.

Wednesday April 27<sup>th</sup>: After setting the newly installed surveillance computer recording, we set off for Bury to do a little shopping.

Our intended first stop was at Bargain Booze in Tottington to acquire some Yellowtail Chardonnay on offer at two bottles for £12, being £6.75 a bottle at both Asda and Tesco. The shop was closed, the shutters being something of a give-away. I thought it was about to turn into one of those days.

We parked in Tesco's car park, reserved for customers of the retail park in which it is sited. It was our intention to return and become customers of Tesco after a quick wander into Bury, so we assumed that it was alright taking advantage of the three hours' free parking.

Jenny headed for Santander to deposit her car booty cash, not that there was much of it, having managed only one sale this season so far due to our holiday and the bad weather, which was not forecast to improve. With temperatures in single figures and approaching the fifth month of the year, it looked like we were not destined for much of a summer. Her small change was short of two twenty-pence pieces and I trumped up a fifty pence piece, receiving ten pence in return.

Jenny then made for Poundland, one of her favourite shops, which occasionally has some useful bargains, even organic ones on rare occasions.

On the way, we called in at the Clarks shop to see if they had any decent walking boots for Jenny, her old ones no longer being waterproof. Surprisingly, they did not stock any women's walking boots, which I half-jokingly suggested to an assistant was somewhat sexist.

We managed to obtain some Dubbin with which to clean my hiking boots from the Timpson shoe-repairers.

We returned to Tesco, lunching at Costa Coffee and then acquiring a few items.

Our return trip first took us to the vet to collect some renal biscuit food for our cat, Toffee, and then to Argos to enquire about obtaining some spare lat holders for a fold-up bed I was repairing. A very helpful lady in Customer Services went to a great deal of trouble to provide a service contact at Jay-Be, their bed suppliers. We made a final call at Jewson builder's merchants to enquire about coving and another helpful lady gave me all the details of the products I needed.

My day had improved somewhat and was about to get better as we called, at Jenny's suggestion, at Bargain Booze on the way home. Not only was the shop open but the Yellow Tail wine offer was extended to £30 for six bottles and we bought a box, as well as an organic beer for me to try. The shop also had some Yellow Tail Bubbly which we quite liked.

Returning home, there had been no incident to set off the alarm so I went upstairs to stop and delete the webcam recording, only to find that the recording time had exceeded the maximum allowed by Microsoft Movie Maker and had stopped automatically. It seemed that

I would have to find some other recording software. I deleted the file and shut down the computer, mumbling something uncomplimentary about Microsoft, not for the first time.

My last useful task of the day was to photograph the lat holder for which I needed spares and to construct and send an E-mail to Jay-Be.

Thursday April 28<sup>th</sup>: It was a morning of administration as I dealt with E-mails, the priority being to sort out the bed lat holders with Jay-Be and thanks to a very helpful lady called Michelle, I achieved a result as she offered to send me the parts I needed.

I updated the village web site, largely to do with the village party arranged for the coming Tuesday, with many activities on the newly-named village green, the new sign to be officially unveiled on the day.

I did eventually get round to winding up the grandfather clock that had been stopped for two days and to cleaning out the fire ready for use again in the very cold, unseasonal weather.

I sat down for five minutes to read the May Digest (the church monthly magazine) Jenny had brought back from her Yoga session at the old School and the cat took full advantage to settle down on my knee and stayed while I tackled the April and May issue of the free magazine, Lancashire Living, that has been around for a few weeks. She eventually moved and I managed my shower before tea.

I rounded off the day by arranging to set up the E-mail account for the lady running the new village Dementia Café, opening in May, the following evening, on her laptop and/or her iPad.

Friday April 29<sup>th</sup>: Our grocery shop took us to Asda at Pilsworth and then to Village Greens and Tesco at Prestwich. The whole journey was uneventful and seemed to take ages.

I updated the accounts, put in the programmes for the week for recording and dealt with a few E-mails. Christine called round for some photos I had promised her and forgotten all about for the village party on the coming Monday, so I said I would print out the ones she wanted and take them round to the Old School the following morning.

Joani Beale telephoned, as arranged, for me to go round and set up her E-mail on her laptop to access the village server I run. I told Jenny I would be about half an hour. I arrived home about two hours later, just about in time for tea. The E-mail task took only a short while. The rest of the time I was sorting a few other things out on Joani's laptop for her.

Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup>: I started on an update to the village web site and that was interrupted, firstly by a delivery of the lat supports I had requested from Jay-Be and secondly by a trip into Ramsbottom. The small market town seemed awfully busy and we were lucky to find a parking space by the station, where we discovered it was Thomas week end on the railway.

A tour of the charity shops netted four DVDs and we then called at Lollo's for a few grocery items. It wasn't until Jenny unpacked her bag at home that she had forgotten to buy

some organic soya custard. I asked how she could forget it when it was on her list. Apparently it wasn't on her list.

Then I discovered my desktop had crashed and it refused to reload. I whipped of the side and brought the back up Windows disc into play. That loaded up immediately, although some of the software and all of the data needed updating. I managed to update Windows XP, the anti-virus software, Java and one or two other bits of software without any problem. I was able to salvage my E-mail files for outlook from the old system disc and I copied all my data from the old system disc, which took a couple of hours but at least the whole process was much easier and quicker than reinstalling Windows XP from scratch.

Having brought the back up disc up to date, I decided to try reloading from the old system disc. That worked. I had no idea what had caused the problem but it seemed to have gone away, at least for the present and if it did recur, at least I knew the back up disc was ready and waiting and I could use that to generate a fresh copy of the system if I needed to do so.

What a fun-packed month this had been.