

## **Greenmount April 2022**

### **Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022**

I spent the day scanning the electronic TV guide for next week for episodes of series we watched that I needed to record and then scheduling all the recordings for the week.

There were some interruptions for domestic tasks.

This was also the day that the government price cap on fuel was raised, pushing gas and electricity prices up even further than Russia's invasion of The Ukraine had so far done as a result of sanctions being introduced against Russia. The effect this was having on the cost of living was disastrous while a spokesman for Shell, one of the world's leading oil companies, had publicly stated the organisation was making more money than that with which it knew what to do. Quite rightly, the Labour party opposition leader, Keir Starmer, had called for a windfall tax on such profiteers but the Conservative Government that had lined the pockets of its friends by issuing contracts to companies in which they had vested interests during the Covid-19 pandemic was, not surprisingly, having none of it.

In this world, the poor were getting poorer and the rich were getting richer. In the next world we shall all have to account for our actions in this one and we shall all be judged accordingly.

### **Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2022**

Most of the day was spent on small, routine jobs, each of which took longer than one would expect, leaving me wondering where time went. The washing lines full of wet items collapsing onto the lawn and patio didn't help.

We had intended nipping down to Bury and we did eventually do so towards the end of the afternoon. I was going to buy some Vogel Bronchoforce for my cough but I seemed to have stopped coughing. The other items we sought were a cushion cup shoe insert for Jenny's painful left heel and some urea-based cream with which to treat the suspected fungal infection. We bought the former from Boots but could not find the latter.

There followed the inevitable visit to Tesco, essentially for some Highland Spring water and we took the opportunity to purchase a few other grocery items while we were there.

### **Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2022**

We were up at 9 a.m., that being the time for Jenny's eye drop, although it was going on for 1 p.m. before I knew it.

After washing the dishes from last evening and breakfast, feeding the birds and fetching in Jenny's washing line before the 30% prediction of rain took effect, I spent the rest of the morning searching for some anti-fungal cream containing urea that could be applied

to the inflammation and fissures on the side and heel of Jenny's left foot. Rocking-horse droppings sprang to mind. That combination seemed not to be available in an over-the-counter cream, so we decided to leave that until we could contact the podiatrist again for advice. Hopefully, that would be tomorrow. Meanwhile, we still awaited the documentation of her findings and her bill.

I asked Rachel to help me put the surplus, varnished skirting which was stored on the staircase, in the garage loft, out of the way, until I needed it for the front bedroom. She said she was waiting for me to clean the glass in the oven door so she could bake a cake for the office so that was my next job. The wood would have to wait until later.

I used the same technique to clean the oven door glass as for cleaning the glass door on the wood-burning stove – a scraping tool fitted with a razor-blade.

I did some administrative work, finishing with a call to a plasterer, Wayne Stott, who said he would arrange to call this week to look at the work in the back bedroom.

I listened to a recording of Jazz Record requests, skipping all but the two decent traditional jazz tracks that were of interest to me.

Rachel needed some labels printing so I installed the label template on her machine so that she could do it herself. This threw up another problem in that the old version of Word 2007 decided it needed to reconfigure itself each time it was loaded. The work-around for this was to manually insert a registry entry which, on the face of it, looked easy to do but I was not anxious to play around with her machine in case it all went pear-shaped. I did contemplate performing a system restore point first but I thought I'd leave things as they were until I could discuss it with her. She was busy decorating an Easter cake she had baked earlier. I heard enough comments from the kitchen to deduce chocolate went everywhere.

## **Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

For the most part, it was a routine day and very wet and quite cold outside.

I folded up the latest issue of the village newsletter, 'The Greenmount Voice' and a church leaflet advertising the forthcoming jumble sale and week-long "Collector's Fair" at the old school ready for distribution.

Jenny's left leg and foot were quite painful, which restricted what she could do.

I managed to finish producing the CD and disc covers for the CD of a Marty Grosz performance I had recorded on cassette tape from BBC Radio many years ago and recently transferred to CD, attempting to improve the sound quality in the process. Since my old Canon i990 had given up for the present, I had to print the covers out on the Canon MG2950, which I didn't like using because I could not remove the stapling margin setting no matter how I tried. I really needed a new, good-quality printer and scanner.

The CD cover printed perfectly and I applied it to the CD. The case inlay threw a wobbler and made a mess of my last sheet of the Avery J8435 labels I used. I was fuming and gave up.

## **Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

Jenny had a really bad night with pain in her left heel. We lost a lot of sleep and, as a result, her eye medication was not kept to time and we were not up early.

I was dressing the wound on Jenny's heel when the third plasterer, who I had contacted on the Trust a Trader web site recently, arrived at 10:45 to look at the back bedroom. We chatted afterwards and he said he would let me have a price for skimming the bedroom and cupboard ceilings and installing plaster coving.

After he left, we had breakfast and I washed the dishes and emptied the recycling rubbish into the various bins.

I decided to have another look at printing the CD label for the Marty Grosz CD on ordinary paper and, after modifying the inlay, that worked a treat. I thought I might use plain paper instead of the pre-prepared, Avery labels and I intended to print the rear of the front cover on the back of the page. Instead I printed the front cover and the inlay again so that sheet went into the shredder.

I had a look online for some Avery J8435 sheets and placed an order for a 25-pack from an E-bay shop, which was expected to be delivered within three or four days.

After a late afternoon snack, we went out to deliver the leaflets I had folded up yesterday. That didn't do Jenny's left foot any good at all.

## **Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

Jenny's hospital visit went well, apart from having to rise at 5 a.m. Even then we didn't get away until after 7 a.m. Nevertheless, we arrived in good time for Jenny's appointment and she was ready to leave in less than two hours, after collecting her medication from the pharmacy, during which time I had been parked up near the hospital, listening to some of a four-cd set of Tom Lehrer. Jenny was now simply on lubrication drops and gel, her glaucoma being well under control and her eyesight having improved.

Grocery shopping at Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath, where we had a packed lunch in the car park, went well too.

We were home for about 4 p.m. and the day had taken its toll on Jenny's foot.

I started going through the TV listings for next week to see what was worth recording for subsequent viewing. Jenny would go through the listings later and let me know if she wanted anything adding to the list.

**Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I started the day by preparing a new schedule for Jenny's eye medication, now limiting it to the daytime only. That took a while.

The Avery J8435 CD case labels arrived and I printed out the sheet for the Marty Grosz CD I had made.

I was about to recommence examining next week's TV listings when Jenny reminded me the door of the left cooker oven did not seem to be closing properly. Inspection revealed the door catch was damaged again and I removed the two screws on the edge of the door to access the rear of the catch on the inside of the door, then undid the screws on the outside that held the catch in place. That enabled me to remove the catch from the door to assess the damage and to see what could be done to repair it.

The pins that held the two catch rollers in place were both damaged so it was a case of removing those and seeing if I had anything that would do as replacements. That was easier said than done, the rollers being held in place by a spring-loaded support.

Dismantling the arrangement, with the aid of a pair of long-nosed pliers, was not too difficult and I managed to find some suitable bolts and matching nuts by rummaging through my stock of assorted, small bolts and assorted nuts, a must for every handyman.

Fitting the roller into the support and then fitting that back into the outer casing with the spring in place in such a way that I could insert the bolt through the casing, support and roller proved to be something of a challenge, the first one being easier than the second.

Having put the first roller back in place using one of the thin bolts I had found, I applied the nut to hold the bolt in place. It immediately became apparent that tightening that up on the outer casing would not allow the spring-loaded mechanism to work so I removed the nut and just left the bolt in place, hoping that the pressure of the spring would prevent it from working loose. I eventually managed to put the second roller in place in the same way and I reattached the catch to the door, replacing the screws that held the door together.

Testing the catch several times indicated that it did work and securely held the door closed. How long that would be the case only time would tell (and you don't get many statements as profound as that).

Meanwhile, Jenny had been baking a cake in the other oven and declared that she could not see clearly through the glass door because there was no light in that oven. I told her there was a light in both ovens, both operated by the same switch, so if it came on in the oven on which I had been working, it should also come on in the other oven. It didn't, so, obviously, the bulb had gone and needed replacing. Fortunately, we had a spare (or so I thought) but the oven was too hot at the time to replace it.

We had a late afternoon snack at about 3:30 p.m. Jenny had not risen early this morning because she had a restless night with pain in her foot, which is why breakfast had been late again.

It was then time to tend Jenny's foot. We had bought some rather promising, expensive, organic skin cream from Unicorn yesterday and Jenny had applied it to her foot before breakfast. I applied some more to the inflamed area, which was looking a lot better, even if it was still very tender.

Back to the oven. I was about to go into the garage for the spare bulb when I noticed our friendly blackbird was scratching around for food so I put out some meal worms just as the odd spot of rain turned into a shower and I got a tad wet. I wasn't happy. I dried off and went into the garage through the front, under the shelter of the car port, with the key to lock the back door of the garage and forgot to put the front door on the latch. Having found a spare oven bulb, I came out of the front of the garage, forgetting to lock the back door. Jenny let me back into the house, reminding me I had forgotten the jacket potatoes she wanted for tea.

It got better. The bulb was the wrong size and of no use to us whatsoever. I put it on one side and went back into the garage through the back door, the rain having eased off again. It obviously thought I wasn't coming out again and before it could throw it down I was in the garage, looking at my spare bulb stock in the garage loft. The oven bulb I found in there was the same as the one I had found a few minutes ago and also of no use to us. I did remember the potatoes this time and I locked the back door of the garage.

It got even better. The potatoes were the wrong ones, at which point I gave up. Jenny went out, taking the keys to the garage door at the back and sorted out the potato issue. Needless to say, the sun was shining by this time.

### **Friday, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

It was the grand re-opening of our Dementia Café, D-CaFF at the Cricket Club after being closed down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was well attended and everyone was entertained by the Greenmount Strummers. Jenny could not make the session due to her left leg and foot problem.

### **Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I was at the old school, working on the electrical jumble in preparation for the sale on Monday. Jenny joined me later in the morning, bringing a packed lunch.

### **Sunday, 10<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

It was a touch of déjà vu.

### **Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I made an earlier start at the old school and Jenny again joined me for lunch, prior to the sale at 2 p.m. until 4 p.m., after which we helped tidy up. It was a long day.

## **Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I had a day of rest, tidying up the recorded TV programmes we had watched over the past couple of weeks or so and backing up my files, not having done so for a while.

## **Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I had broken two pieces off my upper-right pre-molar on Sunday night and the remaining bit of tooth was very sharp in places, catching on my cheek. I reported the problem on Monday morning and I was told someone would ring me back. By this morning I had heard nothing and the irritation was becoming unbearable so I telephoned again and managed to obtain an appointment for 3:15 p.m. to have the roughness smoothed out.

We went grocery shopping to Sainsbury's store in Heaton Park and Tesco in Prestwich. I returned home just in time to attend my dental appointment.

My tooth received a temporary filling and I was given an appointment towards the end of May for a more permanent fix. I reminded the dentist that Jenny was also awaiting a broken tooth being repaired.

## **Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

We didn't get up early and I only had time to hang out a bit of washing for Jenny, feed the birds, wash the dishes, deal with a few E-mails and have a brief conversation with Jenny's nephew, Simon, to arrange a visit from him and his partner, Vicky, next week before we joined Matthew, Carrie and Marie for lunch at Hollands at Holcombe.

Lunch was very nice, having a choice of gluten-free dishes and we dropped Marie off at home in Ramsbottom before returning home. We had planned on pottering round the charity shops in Ramsbottom but it was getting late so we decided to leave that for another day.

## **Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I had intended doing a great deal today but Jenny was still having a lot of pain with her left foot and leg, so in between scheduling the TV recordings for the coming week, I spent much of my time in the kitchen and outside, pot washing, helping to prepare the beef casserole for tea, cooking a chicken for later in the week, hanging out the washing to dry and feeding the birds, not forgetting the odd trip to the general waste bin and fetching the plastic/glass/tin recycling bin down after it had been emptied.

## **Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I was up early and spent the morning at the old school, helping Frank with the sale of DVDs, CDs and records at the first day of the annual Antiques and Collector's Fair. It wasn't as busy as expected and I didn't have to do a great deal.

Jenny was supposed to be helping out on a stall but she was finding standing and walking painful and she remained at home.

After lunch, I helped with the domestic work and prepared tea under instruction and supervision. That was a new experience.

### **Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

As well as my domestic duties, Jenny still being indisposed, I cut the grass front and back, trimmed all the edges and tidied up the border at the front and started trimming the edges and tidying up the border at the back. I left off to clean the lawn mower and put it away and then packed up just after administering Jenny's eye drop at 4 p.m.

I had a brief rest and then listened to the recording of Jazz Record Requests, or at least the first few minutes of it. The whole hour was devoted to the music of Charles Mingus so I stopped the playback and deleted the recording. It wasn't my cup of tea at all.

### **Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

My morning and early afternoon, before lunch, were taken up with routine household tasks followed by raising the head of our bed on the basis that a downwards slope towards the foot of the bed would help the circulation to Jenny's left foot, thereby reducing the pain she was experiencing during the night, resulting in a better night's rest and, hopefully, a quicker healing process. The latter was with Rachel's help.

The supports I used were two house-bricks, each wrapped in a polythene bag, under each of the bed-head legs, raising the head of the bed by about five inches.

I had intended on going to work in the garden but time was moving on and I decided to collate my list of things to do into a single list and throw all the odd bits of paper containing scribbles away. That took longer than expected since I had a very old list in Microsoft Outlook. I kicked that into touch and created my own, meaningful list using Excel.

### **Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I was up early to send a request to our local GP practice using AskMyGP for a face-to-face consultation for Jenny to discuss her ongoing, painful left foot. I included a copy of the podiatrist's report.

Jenny's nephew, Simon. Came for a visit and we had a very pleasant day, catching up on events. We went round to the old school for a brief look at the Antiques and Collector's Fair and we had lunch at The Duckworth Arms.

Jenny had a call on her mobile telephone from one of our GPs while we were at the old school. He seemed very keen to prescribe the medication recommended by the podiatrist as well as some cream for the inflammation on Jenny's foot. This was the fastest response we'd had from our GP since the start of the pandemic over two years ago.

Jenny started her medication and applied the foot cream when we retired for the evening. The latter irritated her foot and she had a painful and restless night.

I submitted the meter readings to our utility suppliers as usual on the 19<sup>th</sup> of every month.

### **Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

Jenny was up at 6 a.m., washing the cream off her foot. She could not stand the pain any longer. She came back to bed and we slept on until 8 a.m.

Jenny bathed her foot in salt water and that seemed to help somewhat. After breakfast, she tried the ointment again at my suggestion. If it still irritated her foot, she would wash it off again and I would let the doctor know tomorrow.

Meanwhile, we prepared for our weekly grocery shopping trip to Unicorn in Chorlton and Waitrose in Broadheath. Jenny had found some sandals to wear that did not make her foot worse, as all her shoes did. Fortunately, the sun continued to shine and it was a nice day.

The shopping trip went well enough but Jenny's foot suffered and she had a painful and sleepless night.

### **Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022**

Jenny spent the day resting her foot, sitting on the settee in the conservatory, in the warm sunshine, with her leg raised on a pillow. That and the treatment improved matters somewhat.

Meanwhile, I undertook the pressing household tasks and, after lunch (which I prepared!), I managed to finish hoeing the patch of the garden in which we grow the soft fruit. That took a bit of a bettering last year when I made it possible to replace the fencing. I doubted that the yield this year would be significant. Neither were we growing any vegetables this year, my focus being on Jenny's health.

### **Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022**

I spent most of my day putting in the TV recordings for the coming week, in between helping Jeny.

### **Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2022**

Jenny had a much better night. She was so tired that we did not have breakfast until noon.

Since Jenny was feeling a little better, we went into Ramsbottom for a potter round the charity shops and we called at Plentiful for some organic groceries.

I started to feel rough in Ramsbottom and developed a dry, tickly cough. On returning home, we had a snack and I fell asleep in the conservatory.

Still feeling rough before tea, I had a wee dram of a strong, single, Scottish malt wh to help somewhat.

Rachel arrived for tea.

### **Sunday, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022**

I had a bad night with lots of coughing and spluttering. I took a Covid Lateral Flow Test before breakfast and it was positive. I wasn't happy. Neither were Jenny and Rachel, especially when I discovered I was infectious two to three days before any symptoms showed.

I didn't feel too bad, an irritating, intermittent cough a bit of a stiff neck and tired. Jenny opened the lounge windows and I put on my mask, the objective being not to pass it on to Jenny or Rachel, if it wasn't too late.

I was confined to the lounge with the windows open during the day and given access to the small toilet as opposed to the more spacious bathroom, apart from brushing my teeth. Jenny was very good despite her painful foot and she brought me my meals on a tray. I was permitted into the kitchen, wearing my mask, after sanitising my hands and putting on a pair of gloves, only to administer Jenny's eye medication.

I spent most of my day watching the World Snooker Championship at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield and my late evening watching recorded TV programmes in which Jenny was not interested.

Jenny did what she could during the day and rested in the conservatory in the evening.

### **Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I had a restless night, sleeping on the settee in the lounge.

I felt a little more rough and the cough was annoying, having made my diaphragm somewhat painful. I also started sneezing a little.

I asked Matthew via Skype to acquire some Bronchostop herbal cough medicine from Boots Chemist and Jenny wanted some organic potatoes from Tesco. Matthew arrived with those around lunchtime, which was very good of him considering how busy he was.

Most of my day was spent watching the snooker again, the first time I had watched it for years. I wasn't really much good for anything else.

I took my first dose of Broncostop at 1 p.m. and I asked Jenny to throw some raw garlic along with the usual basil into my tomato soup, which I had for lunch. If that combination didn't improve matters, nothing would.

I did feel somewhat tired later in the afternoon and dozed off for a short while in my armchair, suitably wrapped in a throw to keep me warm. It was on the cool side with the windows open.

### **Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I watched the snooker again and continued to take my herbal mixture. Jenny kept me supplied with food and non-alcoholic drink.

A new dimension to my affliction was that I started to lose my voice, not a symptom of Covid-19 of which I was aware.

### **Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I seemed to sleep better last night. After washing as best I could in the small basin in the small toilet in my smalls, I didn't feel too bad apart from coughing a bit, being in a cold sweat and having hardly any voice. It felt like I had a touch of influenza.

Matthew had said I should take another lateral flow test tomorrow, being day five of my ordeal, since health care workers were encouraged to go back to work if they tested negative on days five and six. The bad news was that my cough may continue for a while even though I tested negative. (A negative test meant that I was not infectious, not that the virus had gone away completely). Apparently it could take six to eight weeks after Covid to sort itself out. The advice was to drink regularly. Unfortunately, that meant water. It seemed chewing gum helped as well.

What didn't help was acid reflux, which didn't bode well for me, since I had a hiatus hernia and my GP had stopped my regular dose of Omeprazole some time ago. Since I wasn't consulted, I could only assume this was a cost-saving exercise, taking priority over a patient's well-being. To be fair, I could have pursued the matter but I chose not to do so because I seemed to be alright, for the most part, without the medication and I was sure I had read somewhere that its long-term use did have some undesired and potentially serious side-effects on the bowel. That would never do. Besides, I had found some excellent, very strong, sugar-free mints made from natural ingredients (Peppersmith) that sorted things out very nicely.

I decided to take a look at my web site re-design, which has been sitting on the back-burner for ages. I sorted out a few things and reached the point where I needed to look at the java coding for processing the web pages generated for my family tree by Family Historian to produce the pages in line with the design of my web site. In fact I had already produced the code for the name-index page and I had analysed the first Family Historian family page and manually coded it in the style of my web site.

The next step would be to amend the existing Java code to do the latter automatically for each family page. That presented something of a challenge since I had not written any java code for a long time.

I also watched more of the World Professional Snooker Championship. Mark Williams had beaten Yan Bingtao in the quarter finals, the game on which I gave up due to a protracted safety sequence.

### **Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I had a really good night's rest for a change and I had hopes that my infection might be on the wane. When I started to rise from my slumbers, I began coughing again, casting some doubt on my optimism. Nevertheless, I performed another Lateral Flow Test. That proved positive almost immediately so I was still infectious. It looked like another weekend of confinement watching the snooker. I supposed it could have been worse.

Meanwhile, Jenny's foot was quite red and still extremely painful. She had stopped using the cream prescribed by the doctor since it was only for seven days and she had started the second tablet prescribed, having been advised to delay it for a few days to see how the first one worked. So far, nothing seemed to be working. The next step would be the consultation at the vascular clinic on 19<sup>th</sup> May and then we would see what was to be done. Had our GP got to grips with the problem when it first appeared, before Christmas, we might have made some progress by now. Then again, it was my idea to involve the podiatrist. Our GP did not want to do so, which is why we approached someone we knew who provided a private service and that led to the appointment at the hospital.

As well as watching the snooker, I resumed work on the java module to process my Family Tree web pages.

### **Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

Another beautiful day outside, sunny with a clear blue sky and I was stuck in here still suffering from Covid. This is one of those occasions when one wonders whether life is worth living.

I tackled the list of TV and radio recordings for the coming week just using the electronic programme guide since we didn't have this week's Radio Times yet. I also dealt with a few e-mails.

I did eventually tune in to watch some of the snooker later in the evening.

### **Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2022**

I didn't sleep well at all and felt extremely rough when I finally decided to get up at about 8 a.m.

Matt and Carrie had planned to take their mum grocery shopping today and I planned to take a shower since I had not had a proper wash for at least a week because I had been isolating.

First, though, we were both taking another LFT to check the state of play and having breakfast.

Jenny's test was positive. I didn't believe it so I suggested she did another test from a different pack and in the kitchen instead of the bathroom.

I heard a slight noise from the kitchen and thought it was Jenny reacting to swabbing her tonsils. The next thing I heard was Jenny calling me into the kitchen a short time later. I thought she wanted me to take a look at the test result. Instead, she was sitting on the stool and told me she had just woken up on the floor and picked herself up. All she could remember was feeling warm and then nothing until she came round. That was the noise I heard and which I didn't investigate. Jenny was quite shaken and worse was to come.

First, the second test was also positive. Jenny must have been one of those people who had the virus but didn't show any symptoms.

Second, a very large bump had appeared on the top front-right of her head, not that Jenny remembered hitting anything as she collapsed.

We put her fainting spell down to the new medication for the blockage in the rear artery to her left foot, between the knee and the ankle. I didn't like the look of Jenny's head injury though so I dialled 999 for an ambulance, explaining the accident and informing the emergency operator that we both had tested positive for Covid. Because Jenny was conscious and breathing, I was told there would be a long wait for an ambulance.

A paramedic from the ambulance control centre telephoned a little while later and spoke to me and then to Jenny. He assessed the situation and asked me if I could take Jenny to A&E at Fairfield General Hospital. I said I could but we both had Covid. He said that wasn't a problem so off we went.

I dropped Jenny off at A&E at about 12:15. The paramedic had said he would forward his analysis of the situation to A&E before we arrived and he would request a head scan.

Jenny was ready to come home some three hours later and I went to collect her. She'd had the scan and her wound had been dressed. Fortunately, there was no internal damage. She looked and felt like a battered wife.

It had not been one of our best weekends so far and there were over 24 hours of it left.