

**Greenmount
December 2006**

I did not go back to see the GP on 1st December, as planned. I telephoned the surgery to check if my tests were back to discover that the blood test had been completed and was normal. So far so good.

The urine test had not been completed and I was asked to telephone again the following week. To cut a long story short (this must be a first), I was asked for yet another sample. I could only assume they were bottling it and selling it on.

Another week passed before that, too, came back as normal. I then made a further appointment for early January to see what other suggestions were lurking in the dark, unexplored depths of my GP's mind.

Jenny's elder brother, Terry, died on 1st December at the age of 69. It was Jenny's sister, Pamela who discovered the entry in the Sheffield Star Deaths column. She really needed to get out more. She telephoned us to break the not unexpected news. This mechanism of communication of such events should give you some idea about relationships on that side of the family.

Shortly after the conversation with Pam, Jenny received another telephone call, from her eldest sister's granddaughter (I hope you're following this because there will be questions at the end), on the same subject.

On the following night, her younger brother, Wilfred, telephoned with the same information. Apparently, he could not get through during the previous evening because the telephone had been engaged.

While the passing of Jenny's brother is very sad, Jenny and Terry were not very close and we had not talked to his family for many years, so, she had taken it in her stride. We did not attend the ceremony of the following Monday and awaited reports from those who did and were still talking to us.

The house cleaning came to a full stop because we ran out of wood cleaner and we had to waiting for a supply to be delivered. It did resume but we then ran out of time, so the last corner of the kitchen remained somewhat grottier than the rest of the kitchen.

The plan was to have the kitchen and hall completely refurbished during 2007.

Christmas shopping had taken more time and was more frustrating than we expected. Starting the run up to the happy event at the beginning of December, I had decided, was too late. Perhaps the January sales period was a good time to begin.

Rachel passed her driving theory test and it only remained for her to learn to park the car properly. I didn't see why they should pick on her when almost everyone else I parked next to seemed to make a mess of it. She should be taking her practical test in January.

Christmas events commenced with a most pleasant family gathering at my nephew's home near Leeds on the 22nd of December and it gave our New Zealand visitors (Sue and Wills) the opportunity to meet some of their cousins and their families for the first time.

The following day we drove over to Sheffield to collect Jenny's younger brother, Wilf and his wife Anne, who came to stay with us for Christmas. This also gave me the opportunity to collect my old computer from my sister, Barbara. Barbara had informed me earlier that the computer refused to burst into life when power was applied. I knew some people like that.

Sue and Wills joined us for the traditional Christmas dinner and the seven of us embarked on a game of Trivial Pursuit after the consumption of lots of good food and copious amounts of alcohol. It was a case of the lads versus the lasses and I had to concede that the lasses won without too much cheating. In our favour, it was four against three.

On the 27th, Jenny and I joined in the local ramble, up through Reddisher Woods, past Simon's Lodge and eventually out on to the restricted-access army training grounds. Thanks to all of the work the heritage group had undertaken in co-operation with the MOD this year, we were given permission to ramble anywhere across the restricted area on this one occasion without being shot at. We were warned not to touch any unusual items that may be lying about and the only anxious moment was when someone threw a ball for dog and it came back with what, to our relief, turned out to be the ball covered in mud.

Mulled wine, mince pies and cake were served, courtesy of the scout group, on the road leading to the army camp, as we headed home. This was most refreshing as the person who made the mulled wine misread the recipe and instead of pouring in the $\frac{1}{4}$ bottle of brandy, went the full distance. Fortunately, we only had to stagger a couple of miles or so back home, across the fields leading to the golf course and dodge the flying balls (of the golf variety).

After a brief lunch, we drove Anne and Wilf back to Sheffield and then went to Barbara's to fix her PC, which I had, by then, diagnosed as suffering from a power supply failure. I had removed the faulty unit earlier and Barbara had acquired a new one, so I fitted it and the PC was up and running again quite quickly. If only they could fix people in a similar way.

For the inquisitive amongst you, you could have caught a glimpse of our Christmas tree on my webcam. You may also have caught a glimpse of members of the household as they passed by from time to time. You may even have seen something of the festivities on New Year's Eve, unless, of course, you were here. This was a merry event and became merrier as the night went on and the empties went out. We were joined by our neighbours, Mike and Lorna and John and Lynn for another night of good food, good drink and good company. Who could ask for anything more?

We once again wish you all everything you wish for yourselves and those nearest and dearest to you for 2007.