

Greenmount – December 2016

Thursday December 1<sup>st</sup>: We popped into Ramsbottom, mainly to purchase some Christmas cards from one or more of the charity shops, a task we completed successfully, taking the opportunity to scan the shops as usual for DVDs, CDs, books and other collectables that took our fancy, returning with two DVDs, The Enforcer (the Clint Eastwood “Dirty Harry” film, not the Humphrey Bogart one, which is just as good, if not better, even though it is an old film in black and white) and Pierce Brosnan as James Bond (not as good as Roger Moore or Sean Connery) in Goldeneye to add to my growing library.

On the way back, we called at Val and Alan Malden’s, Val being another regular helper at Greenmount Old School and involved in various community activities. Val had promised to lend Jenny an accessory for the wedding we were attending on the coming Sunday. We took the opportunity to meet their well-built, golden Labrador, Sam II and to admire their vegetable garden, not at its best this time of year but well enough to present us with a bunch of purple kale.

I rounded off the day with a few adjustments to the Tootington and District Horticultural Society’s programme on the web site, an update to my website, adding last month’s diary for Posterity, whoever or whatever he, she or it might be and a few more updates to Windows 7 on the Fujitsu-Siemens laptop.

Friday December 2<sup>nd</sup>: Grocery shopping day had arrived again. We called at the tip in Bury to dump several bags of leaves I had raked up from the grass at the side of the house before making our way to Asda at Pilsworth, where the cheapest Yellowtail Shiraz and Chardonnay at £5 per bottle was to be found. We bought a box of each, another bottle of Prosecco for £5 and a bottle of Janneau Armagnac brandy for a Christmas present as well as some dungarees for Jenny and a few edible items.

Our next port of call was Village Greens at Prestwich. We made our way down to the main A56 to find a long queue of traffic towards Whitefield. At this point, up to the traffic lights, it is possible to form two lanes and there being nothing in the outer lane, I took that. It wasn’t until I reached the traffic lights that I realised why there was nothing in the outside lane. The road beyond was closed and police were diverting all traffic left, towards Sunnybank. We later learned that a motorist had collided with a cyclist at Whitefield and we were told that the cyclist had ended up underneath the vehicle.

I performed a quick U-turn at the traffic lights, made my way back up, past Asda and joined the M66 as far as the M60, leaving the latter at junction 17 at Prestwich, back onto the A56.

Unfortunately, Village Greens, although well-stocked, did not have a great deal that we wanted on this occasion.

Our last halt was at Tesco at Prestwich, where we lunched at Costa Coffee on a gluten-free Christmas turkey and bacon wrap each and shared a piece of gluten-free Christmas cake. There wasn’t a lot of gluten-free choice but it was infinitely better than Waitrose (as any mathematician will tell you, any value greater than zero divided by zero produces an infinite result).

Our grocery shopping complete, we headed home up a clear A56, except for the heavy traffic through Bury, having left Tesco at about the same time that the schools finished.

The main tasks at home were for Jenny to squirrel away the groceries while I sorted out the TV programmes for next week and applied yet more updates to Windows 7 on the laptop I was restoring. I also managed to bring my accounts and this record of events up to date before we pottered round to Joani Beal's house for a bit of a buffet, following the Alzheimer's Society's national awards ceremony on 30<sup>th</sup> November, where our village dementia café, D-CaFF, was one of the three nominees for the award in the rural category. Unfortunately, our D-CaFF did not win the award; it went to an organisation in Honiton, Devon. While this was somewhat disappointing, I was sure that it was well deserved by those people in Devon and, in any case, what was really important was the support we were providing to our local community and as long as our visitors appreciated the café, that was reward enough.

We went round to Joani's house at about 7 p.m. for the evening's celebration for D-CaFF having, at least, reached the finals and had a most enjoyable evening chatting over the buffet and drinks, arriving home about 1 a.m. the following morning.

Saturday December 3<sup>rd</sup>: We woke to the alarm at 7 a.m., after about five hours' sleep, feeling just a little groggy. After thinking about rising from my nice warm, comfortable bed for about half an hour, giving the central heating time to warm the house a little, I made it to the bathroom and plunged my arms, face and neck into a basin-full of cold water. The grogginess disappeared rather quickly.

We arrived at the Old School about fifteen minutes late, at around 8:45 and Jenny joined Gwen on the bric-a-brac stall for the monthly Drop-in while I took over the old staff room to test electrical jumble.

All went well and, as I was packing up, I made a sale, which was something of a bonus because I wasn't really there to sell anything.

My end-of-the-morning task was interrupted by a request from Christine to investigate why the hand dryers in the toilets we had refurbished a couple of years previously were not working. Graham said he had reset the circuit-breaker in the distribution board at least once before and I suspected a fault in the power circuit. I tried to reset the circuit breaker again but it wouldn't stay closed.

My next step was to check the hand-dryers in the toilets with Christine and I noticed from the labelling on the fused appliance connection boxes they were all on the same circuit breaker, the one that wouldn't stay closed.

Christine also pointed out what she thought was a leak on the water-heater in the ladies' toilet, supplying hot water to all the wash-basins in both the male and female toilets. On closer inspection, I discovered it was, indeed, leaking.

I traced the supply wire for the appliance up into the ceiling void, to an isolating switch, also on the same circuit-breaker. Switching off the heater at this point allowed me to close the circuit-breaker, providing power to the hand-dryers. Unfortunately, we had lost the hot-water supply.

Discussing the problem with Christine, I somehow ended up with the job of looking at the boiler to see if I could fix it sometime in the coming week. I was also asked if I would like the job of installing flood lights and a sensor at the back of the Old School building. I said it was a question of finding the time.

After lunch, I settled down to put in all the TV recordings for the week, interrupted by the need to light a fire about 3 p.m. because the outside temperature was dropping rapidly. I was down to my last two bags of wood and desperately needed to find time to cut some more logs.

I also installed Microsoft Office on the laptop I had been restoring, the intention being to donate it to the church for use with services there, projecting information for the congregation onto a screen.

Sunday December 4<sup>th</sup>: We had been invited to Chris Turner's wedding and much of the early part of the morning was take up with preparation.

The wedding was at Mitten Hall in the wilds of Lancashire, somewhere in the vicinity of Clitheroe. We set off about 10:30 a.m., in good time, since the ceremony was not due to commence until 1 p.m., following the directions obtained from Google Maps. We made good time until we missed the left turn off the A671 onto the B6246 and ended up travelling through Clitheroe and on towards Gisburn. Fortunately, we stopped and asked directions to Mitten Hall and we were told we needed to head through Whalley and on through Mitten.

We had passed the turning to Whalley a good distance before Clitheroe and I assumed that was the B6246, very helpfully un-signposted as such.

We headed back through Clitheroe, stopping on the way to confirm we were going the right way and, having found several closed shops and an open but deserted restaurant, we received confirmation from a passing chap who advised us we were some distance away from our destination. That wasn't very helpful, since time was passing.

We found a road that led to Whalley and, more by luck than judgement, the road to Mitten and eventually the Hall, having stopped twice to enquire of passers-by that we were on the correct road.

The Hall was not exactly easy to find and certainly wouldn't be my first choice for either accommodation or any kind of special event. Signposts to the Hall from the main A671 would have been helpful.

The ceremony was very nice and it was a privilege to be present to see the son of our very good friends married.

We mingled and chatted for the couple of hours or so until the wedding meal at 4 p.m.. A male singer provided some entertainment, which started off too loud but was soon moderated and tunes like "Mack the Knife" and "Wonderful World" were my kind of music.

The meal was preceded by the usual entertaining speeches. The meal was very good and Jenny's gluten-free meal was served without a hitch. The lady managing the whole

process was extremely efficient.

We sat down and chatted with friends after the meal, until the music started. The very loud disco was certainly not my kind of music and by 8:30 I had a pounding migraine. We left just after 9 p.m. and I was feeling far from well. Miraculously, I found the way home in the dark in less than half the time it took us to drive to the Hall and went to bed more or less straight away. I would have taken some pain-killers but they increased my stomach acid, which I had difficulty keeping under control at the best of times.

Monday December 5<sup>th</sup>: I awoke still feeling rough, with a bad head, a stiff neck and a very sore throat. Breakfast and focussing on cleaning the lounge in readiness for erecting the Christmas Tree helped, the whole process taking until about 5 p.m.

I did manage to find time to contact BT Business again about the mess they had made of my Broadband order after the postman had delivered a second BT Business Hub 5 during breakfast.

Rachel came round to dress the tree in the evening. I finished off an update to the village web site I had started during brief rests throughout the afternoon. As bedtime loomed, my headache and stiff neck started to return, together with aching arms.

Tuesday December 6<sup>th</sup>: Gwen telephoned to say she had booked a table at the Swan and Cemetery for a Christmas meal.

After the usual chores, we finished off the Christmas tree, putting on the lights and the tinsel and Jenny put out the other decorations in the lounge and then started on the entrance hall. I put up the lights in the entrance hall.

After lunch, we put away the boxes in which we keep all the Christmas items in the garage loft, tidied up the kitchen and I put up yet more lights round the kitchen patio doors. By his time, our electricity supplier was on his way to the bank, laughing profusely.

During the slack periods, I managed to squeeze in an update to the Tottington and District Civic Society's web pages.

Jenny commenced her day's ironing at 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday December 7<sup>th</sup>: After the usual chores, we started cleaning the dining area and I confined my attention to the bookcase, which was in a bit of a mess. It took me all my time just to complete the left bookcase of the two, containing mostly Jenny's cookery books.

Thursday December 8<sup>th</sup>: My broadband went down early in the day and I assumed it was being switched to BT so I commenced the configuration of my new BT hub. That would not accept the 64 hexadecimal (counting to base 16 such that hexadecimal 10 represents decimal 16, 100 represents decimal 256 and so on with numbers from decimal 10 to decimal 15 represented by the letters A to F, such, for example, that hexadecimal FF is decimal 255) characters and would only accept an alphanumeric key up to 63 characters. I had to reconfigure my entire wireless network.

The most difficult aspect was the reconfiguration of my Buffalo Ethernet to wireless converter to provide wireless network services to devices that only had wired connections. The Buffalo software would not run in Windows 7 and there was no software upgrade available from Buffalo. I used Rachel's XP laptop for this.

Another issue was that the hub had to be connected to my master BT socket, which meant positioning it in the lounge instead of the conservatory. Thus the Buffalo device that was in the lounge moved to the conservatory, although having the web server on a wireless connection was not really a good idea so I decided to think of a strategy for moving that to the lounge as well.

Friday December 9<sup>th</sup>: I was on the telephone a great deal to BT regarding my broadband, complicated by a line fault. An Openreach (at the time of writing, still a BT owned company) engineer arrived to trace and fix the fault. He turned out to be the son of a neighbour and we spent some time discussing the people we knew. He changed the master BT socket to one of the new kind with two outlets and a built-in DSL filter, although that did not repair the fault. We had to leave for the dementia café (D-CaFF) and left him to it, hearing from him later that he had found a fault on the card in the cabinet and moved my connection onto a port on a new card.

I went off to D-CaFF on foot as Jenny was giving a lift to Doreen and Alex and their two friends. In any case, I had to be early to change into my Santa Claus suit. The place was packed for the Christmas Party and we were entertained by children from Greenmount Primary School singing carols.

I wandered round in my Santa outfit taking pictures. Alistair, our village chairman, also took photos and I merged them together on the village web site.

It was later in the evening that I discovered my acquisition of a static IP address on my broadband had been short-lived. The broadband was down and I left it until the morning to see if it recovered.

Saturday December 10<sup>th</sup>: I spent a little time discussing my lack of broadband with second-line support at BT. The helpful chap managed to restore my broadband connection, albeit with a dynamic IP address.

Afterwards, we went grocery shopping to Unicorn and Waitrose and, for once, travelling round the M60 in both directions was not unpleasant. We did encounter a rather stupid motorist heading out through Whitefield who thought the ability to merge lanes depended on his ability to deploy his outstretched, right index finger in a vertical position.

Sunday December 11<sup>th</sup>: We spent the day preparing the Christmas cards for posting. After that I performed the usual weekly update of the village web site.

Monday December 12<sup>th</sup>: We walked up to the dentist's surgery at Holcombe Brook for Jenny's 3-monthly hygiene appointment and to book our regular six-monthly appointment.

On the way back we called at the post office for 18 second-class stamps and posted all the cards we were sending other than those we could hand-deliver and Edith's card and

calendar to NZ because I needed an address label for it.

After lunch, I telephoned BT to ask about progress regarding my static IP address and the result was that it would not be available until the following day.

Having addressed Edith's package, care of Bll and Sue in Christchurch, I walked round to the post box in the village only to find the package would not go through the opening in the pillar box. I came home and took the car up to the post office at Holcombe Brook, eventually pushed past the long queue and left it on the top of the counter to be collected.

Home once more, I lit the fire and then took a long call from Donna who wanted to discuss the recent introduction of car parking changes at the pub in the village.

I managed to squeeze in an update to the village web site again, adding the pictures from the D-CaFF Christmas Party that Alistair and I had taken, omitting the ones of the children from Greenmount Primary School that we were not permitted to use.

Tuesday December: 13<sup>th</sup>: After washing the pots and cleaning the fire, I set about finishing off the bookcase I started almost a week before and managed to complete everything except two, large, loose-leaf folders that needed reviewing and the top, full of ornaments and photographs.

A welcome introduction was the allocation of my static IP address for the broadband router, which my BT contact talked me through and waited on the telephone until I confirmed it was working. Then I updated the DNSs.

Wednesday December 14<sup>th</sup>: We rushed off to catch the 10:50 480 bus to Bury. We needn't have bothered because by 11:00 it hadn't appeared, so we gave up and walked the ½ mile or so down Vernon Road to catch the more frequent 472 on Longsight Road, for which we had to wait about another ten minutes.

We had a quick look in a large charity shop before making our way to the indoor market to the Health Food Store for what turned out to be a bag-full of groceries and natural health products for a significant amount of plastic. We called at the pound store for some baking item they didn't have and backtracked up to a similar store in the shopping arcade for the same item with the same result.

We retraced our steps down towards the market area, calling at a book store on the way and made for the world-famous, outdoor market this time, to visit a pet shop at which Jackie (a very nice waitress we knew from the Beefeater at Heaton Park) worked part-time, to wish her a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Then it was time to head off to Tesco, calling at W H Smith and Raynors, both stationers, to try to find refills for two of my pens, one a Sheaffer and the other a Schmidt. That was a waste of time. The main event at Tesco was to bag up and post off all the used, printer-ink cartridges in exchange for club-card points and we left with two packs of 12 x 500 ml of Highland Spring water which I carried all the way back to the bus stop and we caught the 480 to Greenmount.

After lunch, I set about trying to persuade the old lap top I was resurrecting to register

the licence for Microsoft Office 2007, which it failed to do. I resorted to the telephone method, only to be told the licence was only valid for one computer, having previously successfully installed it and registering it on two computers.

I uninstalled it and reinstalled it, taking great care to perform restarts at strategic points. Alistair telephoned to let me know that the website was up and running and I made plans to move the server into the living room since there was a significant delay on the wireless link to the conservatory. Even so, Alistair said that it was much faster now it was on a fibre link.

Thursday December 15<sup>th</sup>: Until lunchtime I was sorting out BT yet again and the DNS at Easily (for my personal web site and E-mail) which was exceedingly difficult to configure. Configuration of the DNS at LCN (for Greenmount Village and for Tootington and District Civic Society) was much easier to configure and it was my intention to move my personal domain to LCN when the present period of registration expired.

After lunch, we went for a sortie into Ramsbottom and found three DVDs in the charity shops, Star Wars III Revenge of the Sith, Magic and Frequency. Jenny found a book and we ended our trip with a visit to Morrisons where Jenny bought some gluten-free vegetable suet (I couldn't find any organic vegetable suet anywhere) to make her mincemeat and some candles, since we always ate our evening meal by candlelight.

On returning, I dealt with a response from Demon Internet regarding the transfer of Broadband to BT, BT having failed to liaise with Demon and attempted to activate Office 2007 on the laptop for the church. That failed, even though it was only installed on one PC, having removed it from the others and I had to resort to telephoning Microsoft to obtain an activation code from an automated service.

I finished off the day by installing the new copy of Office 2007 from my recent Amazon purchase on the laptop I use for the Old School to replace the copy I removed.

Jenny remarked that I had worked as hard over the past couple of weeks as I did when I was employed. I did feel as though I was seeing the light at the end of the tunnel at last and hoped the coming week end would finish few of the irons still in the fire.

Friday December 16<sup>th</sup>: Our weekly shop at Unicorn and Waitrose went well despite a fair amount of traffic on the M60 in both directions. Calling at Asda on the way out, for which we used the good old A56 since traffic heading for the motorway (M66) was somewhat clogged passing through Bury, made us somewhat later than usual which probably helped to disperse the early, heavy traffic.

Saturday December 17<sup>th</sup>: My most productive activities, apart from the usual cores, were cleaning out the fire, cleaning up the cat's latrine and cutting some wood for the fire, which I lit about 4 p.m. I started work on an Excel macro to analyse the log from the new BT Business Hub 5. What a fascinating life I led.

Sunday December 18<sup>th</sup>: I had intended to cut more wood for the fire but I seemed to be busy on the computers most of the day. I caught up with the accounts, only to discover TalkTalk had billed me for the month from 8<sup>th</sup> December to 7<sup>th</sup> January. You may recall that my services were transferred to BT on 8<sup>th</sup> December.

Monday December 19<sup>th</sup>: I did eventually get outside to cut some wood for the fire again, which was just as well since we were out of logs for burning, not that there wasn't plenty of wood for cutting under the car port.

Tuesday December 20<sup>th</sup>: We had intended to go to a health food/organic shop in Shipley once the Abel and Cole delivery had arrived. We were still waiting in for it in the mid-afternoon and I telephoned Abel and Cole to find out what had happened to it. A young lady there told me the order had been cancelled because it was below the minimum value, not that the web-based ordering system had the in-built intelligence to tell me at the time of ordering and since computers only do what people program them to do, it doesn't say a lot for the system designers, does it? I was rather annoyed, having wasted a day. The young lady told me that they had informed us of the cancellation by E-mail. Jenny, of course, checks her E-mail once in a blue moon.

As it was, I took the opportunity to finish the router analysis macro. Jenny did some ironing and generally pottered around. Jenny went to lunch with her two friends, Sheila and Lynn and then went to hand-deliver the remaining Christmas cards to local residents. I had a chat on the telephone with my sister, Barbara and put together some graphics for her which she wanted to use in conjunction with some presents.

Wednesday December 21<sup>st</sup>: We finally made it to Shipley. Driving there was fairly straightforward, following the instructions from the AA journey planning web site, since the Google web site was fairly useless. Finding the town centre was not quite so straightforward and we eventually parked in a derelict pub car park and walked into town. We lunched at Costa Coffee and then found the health food shop we intended to visit, making some useful purchases. Back at the car, finding our way back was not so easy, particularly since the light was fading. Having taken a wrong turning somewhere on the route, we followed the signs for the motorway and, after negotiating the Bradford ring road, found ourselves on the M62. From there, the journey home was easy. I was a little disappointed that we did not find our way back using the route on which we came, using the M65.

Thursday December 22<sup>nd</sup>: The day started well with me applying WD 40 to the vertical blind mechanism in our bedroom and the bathroom and then to the Miele fridge door hinge. Following that, the blinds swivelled smoothly once more and, unlike me, the fridge door ceased to creak when manipulated.

We were just about ready when Frank and Gwen called to take us to the lunch booked for Mike, Lorna and the four of us at the Swan and Cemetery. We had an excellent meal and a most enjoyable afternoon.

Friday December 23<sup>rd</sup>: We went down to Bury to Tesco for a few groceries to tide us over the festive break. After lunch, I spent some time putting in the TV recordings for the coming week and cleaning and lighting the fire for the evening.

Saturday December 24<sup>th</sup>: We headed off to catch the bus into Bury. Since the 481 service between Bury and Ramsbottom had been withdrawn, the only remaining bus service through the village was the hourly one between Bury and Bolton. We decided to walk the half mile or so down to Longsight Road to catch the 472, which ran every 15 minutes on Saturdays.

At Bury Interchange, we hopped onto the tram to Manchester, alighting at Deansgate/Castlefield, where we met up with Rachel and we all walked back to collect her car from her parking space at the apartment buildings so we could drive on to the Trafford Centre.

Rachel was hunting for some boots and we decided to potter round to see if anything took our fancy. We had a gluten-free lunch at Marks and Spencer. Apart from that, our endeavours proved fruitless and we came home.

Jenny and Rachel went to fetch a Chinese meal take-away and we had a very nice tea at home, as had become traditional on Christmas Eve.

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> December: We spent most of the morning preparing for the afternoon. The taxi Matthew and Carrie had ordered for us arrived about 1:20 p.m., having already collected Carrie's mum, Marie from Ramsbottom. Bob, Carrie's dad, could not make the family gathering for Christmas dinner at Matthew and Carrie's home. Jenny, Rachel and I made it alright, although Jenny was nearly missing three finger-tips after trying to close the taxi door from the back of the door as the driver pulled it forward from the front. It was one of those sliding doors on the side that slots in and Jenny just managed to pull her fingers out of the way in time.

We had a lovely meal and a very nice time with Matthew and Carrie before the taxi brought us back home at 6 p.m.

This was the first Christmas Jenny had been able to relax and not cook a Christmas dinner.

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December: I spent all day working on the server E-mail system trying to figure out why it would not communicate with Google Mail (gmail). Then I had a message from our village chairman to say the server was down in that he could not access his mail of the web site. Everything seemed to work internally and I was frantically trying to find out what had gone wrong when I noticed the static IP address BT had allocated to my router had changed. How incompetent could BT be?

I reconfigured the Domain Name Servers yet again to reflect the new address and sent a rather poignant E-mail to my BT contact.

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December: Despite suffering with what I thought was sciatica down my left side (hip and front of upper leg) I decided to chance the traditional, village, post-Christmas, walk.

We headed round by the golf club, up to Hollymount, cutting down the field diagonally to Bottoms Hall. There, we turned right along the track, crossing the stream on the right and turning left along the track up to the tennis club at Hawkshaw. We were met in the car park by Faith with a refreshing drink of mulled wine and mince pies.

We crossed the field above the courts, crossed the road and turned right, following the footpath for a short distance, until we reached the path on the left. Those who did not want to attempt a further four styles carried on the main road. The more adventurous of us went up the path, across the field and emerged on the road leading up to the army training camp. We turned right and followed the old road down to the main road, where

we expected to meet up with the other party. They seemed to have gone on ahead.

We headed left for a short distance and then crossed the main road to take the path back towards the golf club. The group broke up after we had crossed the golf course.

After lunch, I spent the rest of the afternoon looking into the E-mail problem with gmail again and found and downloaded a very useful protocol analyser onto the server to track mail traffic, particularly inbound traffic, to detect whether any of the Google mail servers were attempting to connect to my server. My analysis was inconclusive and I decided to try again on another day.

Wednesday December 28<sup>th</sup>: After a restless night, we awoke later than planned and the cat howling like a banshee while preparing breakfast delayed the meal until we had determined the problem. The poor cat had swallowed something that had stuck in her throat and she eventually vomited it up. It looked like the remains of a slug, largely intact. We cleaned the carpet with an anti-bacterial spray, taking care to wear disposable, protective gloves, removing and disposing of the offending, obnoxious item in a plastic bag. The cat seemed much happier and settled down after a brief visit to her latrine.

This exciting activity, surprisingly, did nothing to suppress our appetite, even though our porridge was, by the time we came to eat it, only luke-warm and starting to adopt the texture of concrete.

After tidying the breakfast table and washing the pots, we headed off to Ramsbottom for a tour of the charity shops, where I found four DVDs and Jenny found three books and a few items from Tesco.

By the time we had returned and had a late lunch, the light was starting to fade. The heavy frost from the previous night had melted but would soon be back, I thought, as the temperature during the day had not risen above three degrees.

Thursday December 29<sup>th</sup>: We spent the morning tidying, vacuuming and cleaning in readiness for a visit from John and Lynn in the afternoon. They came to thank us in person for the present we had given to their daughter, Alison, which was a contribution towards the cost of her operation in Barcelona in 2017, a life-saving operation not available on the NHS.

Of course, when one thinks about it, saving lives really isn't good practice as far as the NHS is concerned. It is in the interests of the NHS to actually see the population reduce. After all, the more people there are, the more patients it has and the more patients it treats, the more it costs. The NHS could save a fortune by offering a euthanasia service. The alternative would be to privatise the NHS. Then, it could make money by only treating those who could afford to pay for treatment. By letting those who couldn't afford treatment fall by the wayside and perish, it could eliminate poverty. Better still, bring back Hitler, all is forgiven.

Friday December 30<sup>th</sup>: The usual shopping trip to Unicorn and Waitrose, some 20 miles south of home, over half of which was on the M60 Manchester ring road round the west side, was as tiresome as ever. The outward journey was not helped by a three-car accident in the outer-lane at junction 15 and long queues of traffic trying to get to the Trafford Centre shopping mall. The return journey was hampered by drivers in heavy traffic who

did simply not have a clue. The trip took us all day and we were so late back we forgot to call at the vet's practice in Bury to collect the cat's renal tablets. Fortunately, she had enough to last over the coming long week end.

Saturday December 31<sup>st</sup>: We were up somewhat earlier than of late and spent much of the day round at the Old School working on the electrical jumble.

We were home for about 4 p.m. to give Rachel a lift to Bury to catch the Metrolink into Manchester. She was spending New Year's Eve celebrating with friends. We had a very quiet night in and retired just as the fireworks were exploding in the pouring rain outside.

On that rather boring note, we wish you all a very Happy New Year for 2017. May it bring you enlightenment and a richness beyond material wealth.