

Greenmount – February 2019

Friday, 1st February 2019

I gave Rachel a lift to work in Bury before breakfast and, after breakfast, we set off on our usual grocery shopping trip. It was at this point I discovered scratches to the off-side rear and driver's door and to the door trim along both doors. Obviously some vehicle had scraped the car while it had been stood on the road between my bringing it back from Bury and going out in it again. I was not pleased.

We called at John Lewis at the Trafford Centre on our way to Unicorn to return a Bosch kettle we had bought in November 2017 with a 2-year warranty and which had suddenly sprung a leak the previous day. It had split down the side of one of the water level indicators, there being one on each side of the kettle. Of the two replacements we chose from those on display, there were none in stock and we could not have either of the display items so we settled for a refund.

While there, Jenny bought another new baking tin she wanted. Thus far, the John Lewis heavy-duty baking tins had proved to be excellent, even if a trifle expensive.

While Jenny started her shopping at Unicorn, I pumped up the car tyres. Our journey down had been quite quick and it wasn't long before we were heading for Sainsbury's store in Sale, where we bought a few items before driving on to Waitrose.

We lunched at Waitrose as usual and thus far we had not encountered any congestion in our journey.

We were back on the road at about 3:30 p.m., just as the schools turned out. Even so, the busy A56 back to the M60 flowed reasonably well and, although the M60 was slow going around the canal bridge and the M62 junction, we kept moving and reached Bury within the hour.

We called at Bargain Booze in Tottington for some wine on the way home and I spent the evening putting in most of the TV recordings for the coming week.

Saturday, 2nd February 2019

We were at the Old School before 10 a.m. for the Drop-In and to deal with some electrical jumble. We managed to sell a shredder.

Having obtained the manual from Sharp for a very complicated TV with a separate box of tricks serving as the tuner and having various inputs and outputs, I decided to have another look at it because the last time I powered it up I couldn't get past the access PIN and I needed the manual with instructions on how to reset it to the factory default. This time it wouldn't power up. After spending some valuable time on it, I consigned it to the scrap pile.

We worked on the jumble until about 3 p.m., breaking off briefly for our packed lunch and I was home just in time to listen to Jazz Record Requests at 4 p.m. on BBC Radio 3.

Sunday, 3rd February 2019

I spent the day working on the computer.

Monday, 4th February 2019

In the morning we took the rubbish, mostly electrical, from the Old School to the waste recycling centre in Bury. I called at BM Autobodies to see Karl about a price for repairing the damage to the car and asked him to send me a quote for the insurance company.

We went up to Asda at Pilsworth for a few grocery items and came home for lunch.

After lunch, I spent the whole afternoon in the conservatory putting the London pictures and the photographs of my walk with the lads on 23rd January on my web site, together with the latest Greenpeace Unearthed bulletin and my diary for January.

I also spoke with my insurance company about the damage to the car and left that report for information only until I received Kar's quote.

Tuesday, 5th February 2019

We went into Ramsbottom and toured the charity shops, where I found five more DVDs. My collection was growing rapidly. We also nipped into Tesco for some organic, virgin olive oil and while we were there, I noticed the Yellow Tail Chardonnay was on offer at £6 a bottle so we bought two, not having any.

After lunch at home, I dealt with my E-mail, which comprised the new bill from United Utilities for 2019/10 (an increase of around 3% on the previous year) and an E-mail from my bank advising me of a large payment to my credit card which was to cover the cost of our January London trip. Since there was no quote from Karl, I rang him and he said he had sent it and would send it again. I couldn't find any trace of it, not even in my junk folder or my quarantine folder and I checked that his E-mail address was not on my blocked senders list.

I put the pictures of my latest walk with the chaps, from the previous Wednesday, on my web site and then came into the warm lounge to update this fascinating documentation of life, the universe and everything. Not that the human race was likely to last much longer, given the world-wide political apathy about global warming and pollution.

I finished off my afternoon by starting to synchronise the list of names and numbers in our second cordless telephone with the first. I had attempted to copy them but by some technical oversight, that facility was not included in the BT Diverse 6450 and all I succeeded

in doing was erasing everything from the second telephone, so it was a case of putting in all the contacts manually.

Wednesday, 6th February 2019

I met up with Frank and Steve at Frank's house at 9:15 and Gwen gave us a lift to Bury to catch the bus to Burnley, where we were starting to walk the Burnley Way.

We began by climbing up to the Leeds-Liverpool canal towpath from the town centre and headed south – for a few minutes, as far as the next road bridge, where the canal was closed for some sort of maintenance or development with no alternative path marked.

We came off the towpath onto the road, Finsley Gate and headed north-west, following the route of the canal, which had taken a sharp right turn at the road bridge, as closely as possible. At the junction with Manchester Road, we turned left and rejoined the canal tow path, where there was a wooden signpost marking the Burnley Way.

We left the canal just after the M65 motorway aqueduct and took a footpath onto the road, Pendle Way. We turned right and followed Pendle Way downhill until we reached a footpath on the right, just past Longton Road. That took us down to Calder Park and a footpath by the river Calder.

At the end of the park, the footpath turned sharply left and uphill. We were looking for a footpath to cross the fields on the right and spotted a way marker, for the Burnley Way, which were few and far between on this route, on a stone lying on the ground, that had once been part of a wall and which had collapsed. We turned right on a path that was not well defined across very wet, soft ground. The path followed the contour of the hill, so we made our way forward, ensuring we did not lose height.

As we crossed the fields, there were styles and way markers to guide us and we eventually emerged onto Ightenhill Park Lane. We followed the lane downhill and onto the track straight ahead which led down to the River Calder again. About a third of the way down on the left was a bench where we stopped for lunch.

The track led down to the Higham/Ightenhill Bridge across the River Calder and the path then turned immediately left to shortly join another, single-track road.

We followed the road, with a short deviation along a path through the woods, parallel to the road, to the left. The road eventually became Grove Lane, leading to the outskirts of Paddiham and then we turned sharply left down Ingham Street, on to Holmes Street, to join Lune Street, where we turned right to follow this by the River Calder once more.

The official path should have continued through woodland to the left of the lane we were following, taking us down to the River Calder and emerging on the start of Lune Street but this was closed due to environmental work at the derelict factory site between the path and the river.

We left Lune Street to follow the path by the river for a short distance, leaving the path at the first road bridge, not chancing the path that went under the bridge. This was a mistake.

We followed the river as closely as we could, to find the path we should have followed emerging at the other side of the road bridge with no means of access. We eventually climbed over the wall to rejoin the path for a very short distance before it came up onto the road anyway.

We made our way through the centre of Paddiham, following the river as closely as possible on the side roads and by cutting down a side road to the left, we found a footpath that led down to the river, emerging at Padiham Memorial Park.

At the end of the park, there were two bridges across the River Calder, a lower one and a higher one. We wrongly took the higher one and had to walk on a little, then turn sharp left, downhill to double-back on ourselves, joining the path to which the lower of the two bridges would have taken us. Turning left took us under the road we had been on and at a right angle to it.

From there we made our way across country to the A6068 to join it a short distance to the north of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. Rather than cross the busy A6086 only to re-cross it a short distance further on, we walked by the side of the main road to the canal, turned left and followed the towpath to Manchester Road, Hapton. There was a bus stop close by to the right and there was a bus due in about seven minutes that would take us back to Burnley Bus Station.

We had about ten minutes to wait at the bus station for our bus back to Bury, where we had tea in the Art Picture House Wetherspoons pub before our taxi ride back to Greenmount.

Thursday, 7th February 2019

Simon, Jenny's nephew, had sent me a text message the day before asking if we were in on Sunday. I telephoned him to say we were and we arranged to meet up and go for lunch. I telephoned Rachel to let her know.

I spent most of the day dealing with the pictures from the previous day's walk and documenting the route, above.

I did keep leaving off to help Jenny in the kitchen now and again, her major task being to produce a gluten-free hot-pot lunch for those who needed it at the dementia café the following day.

For lunch, I had one of the delicious, gluten-free tea cakes Jenny had made the previous day. This was her first attempt at tea cakes and it was a complete success.

Friday, 8th February 2019

I started putting in the TV recordings for the following week and left off to go down to the Cricket Club at 11 a.m. to light the oven in the kitchen in preparation for the afternoon's D-CaFF dementia café.

I came home and continued with the TV recordings, leaving off again for the afternoon's D-CaFF. We went down early with a gluten-free hot pot and a gluten-free cake Jenny had made for us and for the guests who required it. Nikki, another volunteer, had made the hotpot and a young volunteer had made the cakes for everyone else.

The room was filled to capacity and we had a very nice lunch. A Valentine's Day themed word-search was provided for entertainment and lunch was followed by a most enjoyable beetle drive.

After tidying up, we came home and I finished off the TV recordings on the desktop computer and also updated my web site with the pictures I took of the walk on Wednesday.

I received the estimate for the car repairs from Karl and BM Autobodies and contacted my insurance company (arranged through the RAC). This was my first claim for decades and was as a result of someone damaging my car while it was parked on the road outside my home so I didn't expect the complicated procedure that followed.

First, because I had chosen to use BM Autobodies the insurance company would not pay the hourly labour rate of £35, capping their contribution to £27.50. I would have to find the difference as well as my £100 excess. Also, my choice of repairer did not qualify me for a hire vehicle while mine was being repaired. Apart from the estimate, the insurance company wanted no less than four pictures of the car showing the damage, the mileage, the VIN and an overall picture of the vehicle, including its number plate. Talk about jumping through flaming hoops backwards. It occurred to me that I should consider changing my insurance company next year.

Saturday, 9th February 2019

It was grocery shopping day, a day late this week, due to D-CaFF. The drive was generally quite pleasant, almost congestion and idiot free. I didn't really fancy much for lunch at Waitrose so it didn't matter that there was little choice of gluten-free food. We settled for a slice of lemon polenta cake each. The cake itself contained no gluten ingredients but it was not sold as gluten-free because (a) it was not sealed to avoid cross-contamination (b) it shared a covered enclosure with two other cakes that contained wheat and (c) there was only one pair of serving tongues for all three cakes, which were pre-sliced.

For those preparing and serving food to customers who read this, the answer to the cross-contamination issue is simple. Only prepare and serve gluten-free food and if you're worried that people who do not require gluten-free items will not eat it, don't advertise the fact that it is gluten-free. Simply display a sign that you have gluten-free options and invite people to enquire. To those who ask, you can say that everything is gluten-free. Serving gluten-free

food to people who do not require it will do no harm whatsoever. After all, a lot of people eat corn flakes and corn (maize) does not contain any gluten.

We were home in time to listen to Jazz Record Requests and what a load of rubbish that was. First on was Louis Armstrong with Ella Fitzgerald. Louis Armstrong was my favourite Jazz musician and I absolutely hated Ella Fitzgerald. Second on was Jimmy Smith with "A Walk on the Wild Side". It's a pity he wasn't mauled to death while he was there. Then we had the first of two tenor saxophone ballads. I did not particularly like the saxophone, with the exception of the soprano sax, which I thought had a similar sound to my favourite instrument, the clarinet and I hated ballads. From there it went downhill and included a cacophonous piece by Stan Kenton. All in all it was a waste of an hour waiting for something lively, jolly and/or slightly humorous in good old traditional style which never matured.

Since there were so many jazz styles, my advice to the BBC was to dedicate just one hour a week to traditional jazz because at the time of writing, all the jazz programmes seemed to concentrate more on the more modern styles, new acts and new releases, which, to my mind, wasn't Jazz at all.

Sunday, 10th February 2019

I started the day scanning some documents, dealing with E-mails, updating my web site and backing up my desktop computer, all before 11 a.m., setting the trend for the day.

Monday, 11th February 2019

We started the day by delivering the Jumble Sale leaflets to local residents on our part of the estate.

I dealt with the TV recordings from the previous day and made sure the recordings were all programmed for the rest of the week.

I turned my attention to deploying an old VHS player/recorder I had acquired from the jumble sale to replace my old Panasonic one that seemed to produce a lot of interference despite several head cleans. The replacement worked well, particularly after cleaning the heads and I was about to remove the old one and insert the new one into the hi-fi cabinet so I could convert my remaining VHS tapes to video files on the computer when I received a text message from my car insurers reminding me that they needed a copy of the repair estimate and pictures of the damage, etc.

I sent those off to the engineers and also dealt with the pictures I took of the dementia café on Friday, generating all the files ready for deployment on the web site so I could pass them on to Marcus, our new village webmaster.

Tuesday, 12th February 2019

In between tending the fire I started for Jenny, I replaced my Panasonic VHS player with the one I had tested, with Jenny's help.

I spent a good proportion of the rest of the day tidying up some old photographs on the computer and placing them into a picture gallery for my web site.

In the evening I went to the village meeting in the church, the major item on the agenda being the Greater Manchester Spacial Framework, a long-term project to manage new house-building and the associated infrastructure. In Bury, in the revised plan, about half of the originally proposed development, was intended to utilise brown-field sites and the green belt land in our particular part of Bury seemed to be safe, not that the greedy, selfish land-owners would approve.

Alistair, our village chairman, presented me with a wooden plaque, made by members of the Greenwood Project, commemorating my term of office as the webmaster from founding the village web site in 2010 to the end of 2018.

Before retiring, I finished off the picture gallery I had started earlier.

Wednesday, 13th February 2019

I should have been walking with the chaps but Frank telephoned the previous day to say no-one could make it so I could have a lie-in, which I did.

It was 10:15 before I was up and crawling and my first task was to check my E-mails. I received a message from my motor insurers E-mail server bouncing the message I sent on Monday. I had misspelt the address. I sent it again. Shortly afterwards I received a second text message to my mobile phone asking for the information. I sent a second E-mail asking for confirmation that my message had been received and to confirm it was what they wanted. I also told them to communicate with me by E-mail and not text messages.

After emptying the rubbish into the appropriate recycling bins, I went out to wash the car, having first telephoned Karl at BM Autobodies, arranging to take it in for repair next Tuesday.

After washing and drying off the car, I came in to deal with more of my pictures, preparing them for the web site and finished that just in time to settle down to watch Pointless on BBC 1, followed by Eggheads on BBC 2, as usual, before tea while listening to the news on ITV.

After tea we went to a most entertaining talk and demonstration of cheese making at the Old School, courtesy of Tottington District Horticultural Society.

Thursday, 14th February 2019

We went grocery shopping a day early so we were free for the jumble week end.

The journey down to Unicorn in Chrolton was fairly straight forward, as was the onward journey to Waitrose in Broadheath.

Lunch at Waitrose was, as expected, uninspiring with respect to gluten free food.

The journey home was more interesting, avoiding drivers who didn't have a clue on the A56 from Broadheath to the M60 and with delays on the M60 as usual due to utter stupidity. Experience taught the more intelligent and experienced drivers to deal with this sort of thing.

I did notice on more than this occasion that a number of other drivers were starting to leave larger gaps between vehicles so that if the one in front had to come to a halt, they could keep moving, albeit slowly. My driving technique seemed to be having a positive effect on other drivers, the principles being never having to come to a halt on the motorway and always leaving enough space for others to manoeuvre between lanes.

Friday, 15th February 2019

I updated my web site with some new pictures and consolidated all the odd few pictures taken in and around the house over the years in my development version of the web site. That didn't go too well and I had to leave off for lunch before going round to the Old School to start on the jumble.

I didn't manage to make a start at all on all the electrical jumble that needed testing and which was stored in the cellar; I was too busy dealing with the new electrical jumble that had come in recently, which kept me busy until about 5 p.m.

I brought up an old Apple iMac system that was working but which had been left with a lot of personal and sensitive information on it and which loaded straight into the person's account. I needed to wipe it clean and tried to find out how to reset it to its factory settings, without much success. I resolved to chat online with Apple when I had a free moment.

Saturday, 16th February 2019

I was at the Old School before 10 a.m. and continued clearing the more recent electrical items before finally managing to make a start on all the older items in the cellar.

Jenny helped by advising helpers in the cellar which boxes had been tested and could be brought up for the items to be put out on display, which she also did. Jenny also tested domestic items and lamps, which was a great help, freeing me to work on the more technical; items.

A volunteer brought in a spare SATA disc for me to insert into the Windows PC I had and my plan for the following day was to install Windows 7 on it.

We finished at about 5 p.m to discover that my keys would not unlock the car. Jenny walked home for her keys and came back about twenty minutes later. Jenny's keys worked and I remarked that we were fortunate we so close to home and perhaps she should think of carrying her keys on a regular basis in future.

At home, I disassembled my key fob, which wasn't easy and removed the battery. I then searched for a replacement in my inventory list to discover I didn't have any. I did remember replacing the battery not so long ago in the scales we used to weigh out the cat's food and I used that one. I had access to my car again. I made a mental note to buy some batteries at the earliest opportunity.

Sunday, 17th February 2019

We had another long day at Greenmount Old School.

Monday, 18th February 2019

We took a couple of hours off to take the rubbish from the old school to the tip in Bury and then pay a visit to Home Bargains for some bottled water and a few other items. I bought a couple of packs of rubber bands for the old school electrical jumble because I found they kept the wires wrapped neatly on the equipment I had tested and priced for display.

I dropped Jenny off at home, picked up my tool box and went to the old school, leaving Jenny to carry on with a few jobs at home. Jenny joined me later for lunch and we carried on with the electrical jumble until 3 p.m. I started tidying up, ready for the sale at 4 p.m. Meanwhile, it started to rain heavily and all the jumble being sold outside in the yard had to be brought inside. We ended up with the DVDs and CDs as well as the electrical items.

Our colleague, Tom, came in to help Jenny, taking the money and bagging the sold items, leaving me free to wander round and assist people. We sold some expensive items as well as the usual cheaper ones and we did quite well.

Trade dried up early and we packed up, boxing a few items we wanted to keep for the next sale and the rest for dispatch to Father Wyatt in Salford. We left about 6:15 p.m., which was earlier than usual.

At home, I called Rachel, who was at her flat and she said she would not be seeing us until the week end due to her work schedule.

I settled for a chicken curry for tea, which Jenny made along with her own tea, while I relaxed in the lounge.

Tuesday, 19th February 2019

It was yet another early start because I was taking the car into the body shop for dealing with the scratched offside doors and damaged door trim. I still had not heard from my insurance company and I had resolved to tell them to forget it and I would take my business elsewhere when the policy was due for renewal. The insurance was arranged through the RAC, the organisation that sold Rachel a new car battery when she didn't need one, so, all in all, the RAC was, to my thinking, utterly useless and unreliable if not downright dishonest.

Jenny came with me to Bury and we came back on the 474 bus to Longsight Road rather than wait 20 minutes for the 480 to Bolton that came through our village every hour for most of the day, the only bus that did.

Having walked home from the bus stop, which took about ten minutes, fortunately dodging the rain, I settled down to deal with my E-mails. There was still nothing from the car insurers and a message from my energy supplier, Bulb, prompted me to read the meters and submit the readings so that my monthly bill was accurate.

I brought the accounts up to date and reconciled them with the bank.

I resumed some work revising my web site picture gallery until lunch time and left off for lunch and to light a fire. It turned very cold.

I spent the afternoon dozing in the chair in the lounge, occasionally tending the fire, feeling somewhat exhausted after the long, busy week end.

Wednesday, 20th February 2019

I was up just after 7 a.m., washed the pots from the previous evening and put out the breakfast items, Jenny having laid the table before retiring the previous night, while Jenny had a shower. Jenny was meeting up with Gwen, Frank's wife, at 10:30 for a trip into Bolton.

I had arranged to meet Frank at Steve's house at 9:30 so that Steve's wife, Lavinia, could give us a lift to Ramsbottom to catch the bus to Accrington. From there we caught a bus to Hapton where we resumed our walk, following the Burnley Way.

We alighted at Hapton railway station and headed westward along a path on the south side of the railway line. This crossed the railway line and M65 by way of a high-sided, high-level, concrete bridge, bringing us out by the Leeds-Liverpool canal, on the opposite side to the towpath.

We continued westward, along a narrow path before turning left to pass underneath the M65 and climbing up to a path following the railway line westward on the north side for a short distance before crossing it and doubling back, heading east to enter the woodland at Castle Clough.

In Castle Clough, the path turned right and we followed it to the far end of the Clough. The

path was narrow in parts with a long, steep drop to the left, down to the stream.

The path emerged a narrow lane, which we followed uphill for a short distance before turning left, down to and across the stream, up the far side of the Clough, to cross open fields. Here, we felt the first spots of rain.

We crossed the main A679 Accrington Road and went up a lane opposite, turning left before the farm buildings and taking a badly signposted, waterlogged track across a field to Hameldon Woods.

As we entered the woodland, the path turned right, uphill. The path had been well ploughed up by horses and we picked our way through the woodland, finding a convenient log on which to sit for lunch.

We reached the top to pass onto open moorland as the rain became more showery, making our way towards a ruined cottage on the horizon and then up to some dwellings in the distance, slightly right. Here we turned right on a narrow road and followed this as it curved to the left, uphill, by the side of what appeared to be quarry spoils.

Having gone too far along this path, we backtracked and took the narrow path by the stone wall on the left. This path climbed again and, in the more persistent rain, became a stream. As we reached the top of this path, it turned left, following the stone wall and we stopped to put on our waterproof trousers. It was here I discovered the zip on the right leg of my overtrousers was faulty and I had to manage with the Velcro fastenings. This area was also very boggy.

The heavy, wet going did not last too long as we came to another single-track road, turning left, passing a weather station. The long road went steeply downhill and continued on to join a softer-going track, leading to another lane, down to the main A682 Manchester Road at Clow Bridge.

We discussed the possibility of going on to Townley Hall in Burnley but since we were rather wet and the going had been heavy, making us feel somewhat tired, we opted for a refreshing, warm drink in the New Waggoners at Clow Bridge before catching the Witchway bus back to Rawtenstall and then the bus back to Bury, where we had tea in the Art Picture House as usual before our taxi ride back to Greenmount.

Thursday, 21st February 2019

I spent the day working on the computer and resting. My desktop computer was acting up and needed some attention. Without it, I had no means of using Windows Media Centre for my TV recordings.

Friday, 22nd February 2019

My car was not ready; it was waiting for the faulty, heated, rear window to be replaced.

Meanwhile, the insurance company confirmed they would pay the repair bill for the damage to the off-side doors less my modest contribution.

I decided to take my over-trousers back to Go Outdoors in Manchester from which they were purchased less than twelve months earlier. We caught the bus to Bury and the tram to Manchester, walking from Market Street to Go Outdoors on Great Ancoats Street. I misjudged the location of the shop and we would have been better alighting at the next stop, Piccadilly Station.

When I presented the trousers, I was told they were too dirty and would have to be washed before they could be returned. When I had spoken with a young lady on the telephone earlier and confirmed the procedure for dealing with the faulty zip, she didn't mention anything about the trousers having to be clean.

We came back to Bury on the tram, having wasted the afternoon and sauntered to the garage to collect the car. The chaps at BM Autobodies had made a good job of it and we drove home, calling at Tesco in Bury to pick up a few items for tea.

Saturday, 23rd February 2019

We went grocery shopping to Unicorn in Chorlton, Sainsbury's supermarket in Sale and Waitrose in Broadheath. Driving was trouble-free for a nice change.

Sunday, 24th February 2019

I tackled the desktop computer problem and, by early evening, I thought I had sorted it out. Then I discovered I hadn't and I was back at square one. I decided it was time for a new one, although I wasn't sure how I was going to manage without Media Centre, which was not available in Windows 10, at least, not officially.

In between tasks, I managed to find two brief windows to sponge my waterproof trousers, to remove the mud. Jenny also gave them a going over.

In the evening, I finished submitting the TV recordings for the coming week using Hauppauge WinTV8. Since didn't have the search facility of Media Centre, I had to scan the Radio Times quite thoroughly, which was very time consuming and prone to omissions.

Monday, 25th February 2019

We repeated our excursion of last Friday to return my faulty over-trousers to Go Outdoors in Manchester, with a couple of minor variations.

First, I found a more direct route to Go Outdoors on Ancoats Street from the tram station in Market Street.

I dealt with the lady I saw on Friday and she accepted the return of the faulty item and gave me a receipt. The resolution of the fault would take about three weeks, which was somewhat inconvenient since I was walking in just over a week's time again.

While at Go Outdoors, I bought a pair of Craighopper Kiwi Winter Lined trousers and looked for the ladies' equivalent for Jenny, without success, since they didn't have her size in stock, so I said I would search for them online and order them to collect in-store, thereby saving a delivery charge.

The second variation was that we caught the bus back to Greenmount. Yes, we arrived back at the interchange in Bury just in time to catch one of the rare 480 busses that served our village.

At home, I looked at ordering some grocery items for Jenny's gluten-free baking.

Tuesday, 26th February 2019

I had another look at the desktop computer and it seemed to spring into life. That was short-lived and I concluded that the graphics card was faulty. I considered ordering a replacement, there being one on E-bay that had not been used but I decided it wasn't worth it and dismantled the computer, retaining the discs, giving Jenny some bits for the car booty and consigning the carcass to the tip.

I then contemplated a strategy for my data and added three 2 TB portable hard drives to my list at Amazon. (I also added a USB serial console cable for the Cisco firewall I had been keeping on one side.) The remainder of my strategy was to purchase a new laptop when I found a suitable specification.

I turned my attention to printing and scanning, since both my printer/scanner and my older printer were both accessed over the network via my desktop computer. I tackled the printer/scanner first, since it had a wireless connection. While I succeeded in connecting it to the network, I could not make the scanner work over the network and, after several attempts, I gave up and resolved to use an old laptop as a print/scanner server, which would need configuring.

I took time out to make some Seville orange marmalade with Jenny. That was something of a disaster as well, so not much was going my way this week and when the marmalade would not reach its setting point, I was contemplating the futility of life, the universe and everything.

Jenny saved the day as far as the marmalade was concerned by simmering off a good deal of water until the marmalade started to thicken, then adding the juice of a third lemon at which point I brought the mixture back to the boil and, lo and behold, it actually started to set. Jenny bottled it while I struggled on with my computer problems, suggesting that she might be better at fixing them than I.

I was wondering how much worse thing could get as we had tea. I wasn't surprised to later

find that Hauppauge's WinTV8 TV software had failed to record the episode of Shetland on BBC 1, even though its scheduler said it was being recorded. I spent much of the evening fiddling with it trying various approaches to make WinTV8 work without success while watching the trilogy of episodes of Last of the Summer Wine dealing with Compo's (Bill Owen's) death. That was just what I needed to cheer me up.

I eventually had to reinstall WinTV8 to make it work and, fortunately, it had not forgotten its list of channels or scheduled recordings. The funny thing was that, although I could not make Hauppauge's WinTV8 work until I reinstalled it, NextPVR software worked fine with the Hauppauge tuner and drivers. It occurred to me that Hauppauge needed to improve WinTV and, for all I knew, they may well have done so with version 8.5. The trouble was that it was not freely available to people like me who had purchased older Hauppauge hardware, which shipped with WinTV version 7.

I decided to write off the past week or two, what with all the computer problems and the damage to the car, which had left me wondering just how much worse things could become.

Wednesday, 27th February 2019

A good night's rest and another nice, sunny day with temperatures well in excess of the norm for this time of year seemed to have put a better complexion on matters.

I moved Rachel's old XPS laptop, originally running Windows XP and now running Windows 7, into the conservatory to act as a server for the printers and the scanner.

I successfully configured the Canon MG2950 printer/scanner to work wirelessly on the old laptop and discovered that it also worked wirelessly on the laptop I used in the lounge. I was able to scan documents using the Canon software, My Image Garden, although the scanner was not accessible from the old version of Adobe Photoshop I had. That would not load the Twain drivers it needed and I didn't know why.

I also configured the Canon i990 on the XP laptop and managed to access it from the laptop in the lounge.

I placed an order with Amazon for three new 2 TB portable, USB hard drives to make sure I was able to back up all my files and media. Until they arrived, I only had one copy of my files and one copy of one of my media discs since losing the desktop.

I also ordered a USB console cable for the Cisco Firewall I had tucked away so I could configure it for home use and some organic psyllium husk powder for Jenny. She used it in her bread-making.

I had accidentally switched on Amazon Prime, which was annoyingly easy to do and I didn't want it so I had to find out how to turn it off, otherwise I would have been automatically billed monthly for it on my credit card after the expiry of the free trial. It was fortunate that I noticed it and Amazon ought to make the subscription offer to Prime more obvious and easier to avoid.

After all that feverish activity, we went out in the sunshine for a potter round Ramsbottom. In one charity shop, I bought five Jazz CDs and a sixth CD of old TV and Radio theme tunes at £1.50 for two. There was another jazz CD I would have bought had it not been badly scratched and I would have paired it with another CD of 1950s hits for a further £1.50. They also had about a dozen Jazz LPs, including one of The Firehouse Five Plus Two and several of the Dutch Swing College Band. Had I had more time, I would have bought them all and converted them to CDs.

The only other charity shop that held anything of interest for me was too expensive, offering a four-CD collection of trad Jazz tunes by various artists for £4. I would have paid £3 for them.

From Ramsbottom, we drove to Matthew's house, where we left our car on the drive, Matthew and Carrie being at work. We walked down the road to The Crowded House, an unusual restaurant in what used to be a house in a terrace of houses on the main Manchester Road. The restaurant reminded me of the [Raumati Social Club Café at Raumati South](#) in New Zealand, not so much externally but internally and we enjoyed the food and the relaxed atmosphere. Perhaps the lady who served us, one of the owners, having spent some time working in Melbourne, explained the latter.

After our meal, we walked back to Matthew's house to find his motorcycle blocking our exit. We knocked on the door and went in for a chat and a cup of tea. Apparently, he had come home early from work, having started early and had used his bike with the weather being nice. He had tried to contact us on his return home but we didn't hear our mobile 'phones ring.

We eventually left for home around 5:30 p.m., after Carrie had returned home.

Thursday, 28th February 2019

I spent the day tidying up in the conservatory. I had Rachel's old laptop running Windows 7 working on my desk, primarily as a print server for my Canon i990 printer. I had the Canon MG2950 printer/scanner working on the network.

My Amazon order for the Psyllium Husk Powder for Jenny and the USB serial cable arrived so Jenny was now in a position to make some more bread and, when I had finished tidying up my desk, I was able to start playing with the Cisco firewall.

Access to the firewall console port was via the serial cable and I had to connect to the serial port, COM4, it created in Windows 7 using a terminal emulator. I tried Putty but that didn't work so I found a link to download Hyperterm. That worked a treat, although it was a 30-day trial version and I had not yet checked on the cost of the licence.

Part of the tidying process included printing labels for the marmalade we made a couple of days ago and sticking them on the twelve jars Jenny had stored in the fridge.

My last task before tea was to print off the directions for our journey the following day to Poulton-le-Fylde.

Why Poulton-le-Fylde? You will have to read the March 2019 chapter in this episodic saga. That's what's known as a cliff-hanger.