

Greenmount June 2018

Friday, 1st June 2018

The usual outing to Unicorn and Waitrose was augmented by an initial call for diesel at Tesco in Bury, followed by a brief visit to Asda at Pilsworth.

Apart from the two-lane traffic jam approaching Broadheath on the way to Waitrose and the usual, three-lane traffic jam on the returning M60, our day was enriched by the failure of the checkout machines at Waitrose to accept our payment card and I had to go round to the nearby cash machine to withdraw enough cash to pay the bill since every payment machine in the store was affected. That being the case, there was something of a queue at the cash machine and I was concerned about our cold and frozen purchases in the trolley being adversely affected by the heat of the day, the outside temperature having risen to 25°C, as a result of the delay.

To be fair to Waitrose, we later learnt that it wasn't their fault. Apparently it was caused by some glitch at the Visa payment clearing centre. What the glitch was, no-one seemed sure, or, if they were, they weren't saying, which made me wonder if it was some sort of cyber attack. Financial organisations in the past had tended to keep rather quiet about such things.

The heat of the day resulted in a thunderstorm in the evening with a torrential downpour, from which the garden benefitted. It didn't bother me since I was busy putting in the TV recordings for the coming week.

Saturday, 2nd June 2018

Our day started with a trip to the Old School for the monthly drop-in, which was not very well attended. Jenny and I displayed some electrical items we had kept back from the jumble sale and worked on some new items that had come in, adding them to the display. We did not sell anything, so all the items we had tested were packed away again and saved for the next jumble sale. The remaining items were packed away for testing.

I took about an hour out from working on the jumble sale items to work on a faulty printer, owned by a couple who came to the last jumble sale. The problem was that the nozzles, particularly the one for black ink, were partially blocked and needed cleaning. It took three goes to clean them and produce a decent print again. The lady was really pleased I had fixed the problem and I explained that it had probably been caused by using compatible ink cartridges rather than Epson cartridges. My advice was to use the manufacturer's cartridges.

My suspicion was that the quality of the ink pigments and/or the solvents used in compatible cartridges was not as good as those used in manufacturer's own cartridges, hence the huge price difference. I did know that good quality solvents were not cheap.

We came home for lunch, after which Rachel and Jenny packed the car for the following day's car booting.

Meanwhile, I dealt with TV recordings on the computer. I had planned to go round to see Christine about a problem with her computer but she had telephoned to say all was well when she loaded it up. She also said she had some straw for us. We had asked about some when we were at the drop-in and she did say she would obtain some for us from the family farm.

I finished off the work on the computer instead.

Sunday, 3rd June 2018

Jenny and Rachel went off car-booting and I, having leapt out of bed, woken by the birds, just after 4 a.m., stayed up and started work on the patio weeding. Apart from a lunch break, I worked solidly all day, finishing off the side passage and the front of the house.

Somewhat shattered, I packed up just before Jenny and Rachel returned home from a decent day's trading.

Monday, 4th June 2018

Jenny worked on her car booty, emptying the car and sorting out the garage. I lent a hand with the heavy lifting and tidying now and again, tidying my own bits and pieces in the garage.

One of Jenny's folding tables had broken and I commenced a repair on that which involved gluing one of the legs at the top. The leg assembly had become detached from the table, having lost the securing pins, splitting the wood around the fixing hole on one side. It was a case of sticking it back together and then acquiring some new pins, the plan being to replace the originals with some bolts, washers and nuts. There was no rush since the glue needed 24 hours to set.

Tuesday, 5th June 2018

My day started at 7 a.m. and, after breakfast, I started work on a collection of songs with flower connections in them for a sing-along at the dementia café on the coming Friday. First on the list was "Daisy Bell", probably better known as "Bicycle Built (or Made) for Two". Finding a rendition of the original version composed by Harry Dacre in 1892 was not easy and I left off to go to the Incredible Edible plot to help Donna at 11 a.m., returning just in time for lunch at 1:30 p.m.

After lunch I resumed work, completing two songs (the original "Daisy Bell" and "Oranges and Lemons") and, having acquired the lyrics for a third (You Are My Sunshine) by 5 p.m., I gave up due to fatigue.

I did manage to squeeze in a little more work on the redesign of my web site before relaxing for the evening.

The day ended with an update to this blog while Jenny watered the back garden plants and I went out to help water the front ones, tripping off to bed about 10:30.

Wednesday 6th June 2018

What an exciting day we had.

I was up at 7 a.m. as usual to give the cat her first daily dose of thyroid gel and we breakfasted early.

The post arrived early and the tap aerator arrived.

We went to Bury in the car, dropping some items off at the Old School for the jumble and we called at the Cash for Clothes cabin at Crosstones again, which was closed again.

We drove round to the one in Bury centre and exchanged the clothes they would accept for a small amount of cash.

We went round to the trade park behind Bell Lane and I visited three companies before I obtained an O-ring I needed for the hose reel I was repairing. The one I purchased for 20p was the correct bore but had a 3mm cross-section rather than the 2mm one I wanted. Still, I thought I would give it a try.

I couldn't get the sink basket drainer seal anywhere.

We left the car as usual in the car park at Tesco since we were shopping there last and nipped across to Bury market. I was hoping to obtain some other items there but the only success, or so I thought, was 1 metre of elastic line to repair the black toggles for the picnic bench cover.

After visiting Poundland for a large bag of assorted rubber bands for the Old School electrical jumble (we used rubber bands to wrap up wires and such), we headed across to Tesco and then home.

We dumped our shopping and went to Summerseat Garden Centre for lunch.

Back home, I decided to repair the kitchen tap, fitting the aerator. Unfortunately, the rubber washer seal that came with the new aerator was too thick and the end of the tap would not screw on to the spout with the washer in place. Without the washer, water leaked up from the end of the tap. I tried some Bosswhite jointing compound and, when that did not work either, some PTFE tape. I still had no success and I did not have a thinner washer to fit. After over an hour of fiddling about I gave up.

I turned my attention to the hose reel. The new O-ring was too large but it didn't seem to matter and it fitted where it should. Unfortunately, I had forgotten I also needed a tap connector.

Lastly I started to repair the bench toggles. The elastic line I had purchased firstly was too thin and secondly I had only purchased half what I needed, having wrongly measured the requirement for four toggles.

I gave up on the day, which had been just about a complete waste of time and money. I could have used the time much more productively.

I turned my attention to a CD compilation of tunes with a plant or green-fingers connection, together with the lyrics, for a D-CaFF sing-along on the coming Friday. That wasn't as easy as it sounded.

Thursday, 7th June 2018

We did the usual grocery shop a day early and the difference that made to the motorway network was amazing. Apart from a closed lane just after we joined the motorway on the outward journey, that is.

Waitrose had about half a dozen gluten-free, egg and cress sandwiches and that was it. We didn't fancy any of those so we skipped lunch.

I continued the work on the CD for D-CaFF for the rest of the day.

Friday, 8th June 2018

I was up early and finished off the D-CaFF CD and Joani called to collect the CD and the printed vocals for duplication.

D-CaFF was a great success, with potting and planting, followed by tea and cakes and then a sing-along to my CD.

We had an early tea at home, not having had any lunch for the second day in a row, after which I concentrated on putting in the TV recordings for the week.

My day ended with watering the plants again about 10:30 p.m.

Saturday, 9th June 2018

Another early start saw us in Ramsbottom for just after 9 a.m. with a surprisingly high number of free parking places at the station car park.

We potted up Bridge Street, calling at the charity shops that were open and the hardware shop to obtain some bits to repair the kitchen tap and the foldable table Jenny used for car booting, making it to the Pentecostal Church for about 10 a.m., in good time to find a seat in the church hall, near the front, for The Pitch. This was an opportunity for organisations to bid for funding from Bury Council by giving a three minute presentation. After all the presentations, everyone in the audience was given a form on which they voted for five of the sixteen projects. The results were announced and there was enough funding to give all but the last three projects the amount they requested and the last three received one third of the remaining funds each.

We came home for a quick snack and then Rachel and Jenny started to pack the car for the following day's car boot sale in Ramsbottom while I repaired the broken car boot table using the bits I had purchased in Ramsbottom, after drilling out the holes to 5 mm diameter.

Rachel gave us a lift to Matthew and Carrie's house, where we enjoyed a lovely barbecue with Matthew and Carrie and Carrie's parents, Bob and Marie, to celebrate Marie's birthday, which was the following day.

Marie and Bob gave us a lift home, where Rachel and Jenny finished packing the car for the following day.

After that, we had a cup of tea and a piece of cake before relaxing for the evening.

Sunday, 10th June 2018

It was another lovely sunny day with a slightly misty start and the grass was very wet with dew. I knew this because I had occasion to walk across the corner of the front lawn in sandals at about 6 a.m., after taking the car up the drive for Jenny and Rachel to go and do the car boot sale in Ramsbottom.

I listened to Jazz Record requests, recorded from the BBC the previous day and performed the routine morning chores.

I started work clearing the drive block paving of weeds about 7:15 and worked more or less solidly until noon, when I left off for lunch. Progress was slow and I had not done half of it by then and there were still the surface drains to clean as well.

I was hoping to finish the drive and cut the grass at the front at least but, at lunchtime, I was thinking it was going to take another day and, fortunately, the weather forecast for the next couple of days looked quite good.

After a half-hour lunch break I continued with the drive cleaning and finished the sloping part up to the surface drain.

I was on my knees, cleaning the surface drain across the drive when Jenny and Rachel returned about 4 p.m. and I finished that, packed up, came in, cut my hair and beard and followed Jenny into the shower.

After that, I gave Jenny a little help with the preparation of tea and then retired to the lounge while Jenny did the complicated bits, finally sitting down at 6 p.m.

Just after I came in, it started to rain, which wasn't forecast earlier this far south. Obviously, the band of rain had drifted from its expected course. It saved me watering the plants. I just hoped it dried off enough by morning for me to cut the grass at the front.

Monday, 11th June 2018

I started by helping Jenny set up to sort her car booty on the drive and then cut the grass on the front lawn. For the rest of the day, in between helping move heavy boxes around, I trimmed the lawn edges, cut the grass on the side near the plant border that the chaps who now cut the side missed, removed the weeds from the footpath and tidied up.

I would have made it round the back were it not for a visit from a lady we know from the D-CaFF dementia café and a brief visit from Lorna, our neighbour just down the road. The back garden was tomorrow's task.

Tuesday, 12th June 2018

I spent the morning cutting the grass at the back, trimming the edges and I started tidying up the borders.

After lunch, I worked on a problem with Jenny's laptop. Every time I logged on, I received a message telling me that something could not start but it didn't say what. Earlier examination of the system log highlighted three services that the system tried to start that should not have been there because the software had been removed. A fourth service that gave rise to an error in the log was associated with Alcohol 120%. That software required an update but the update did not solve the problem.

I needed to perform a clean installation, which meant uninstalling all of the software and services associated with it. The service giving rise to the error in the log did not uninstall and required an edit to the Registry. That was an issue because of the permissions (i.e. the entry was protected). After spending a considerable amount of time and several system restarts, I managed to remove the offending item and was ready for a clean installation.

I followed the procedure on the Alcohol 120% web site and the installation of Alcohol 120% went into a loop, asking for system restarts over and over again. At that point, I gave up and logged an issue with the support team.

The response was a repeat of what was on the web site, which I didn't find very helpful and I gave up for the present.

Wednesday, 13th June 2018

I continued with the back garden, cleaning the cat's latrine and tidying the borders.

That was followed by the planting of some sunflowers close to the back fence, for which it was necessary to cut back some of the existing plants that had spread.

Jenny and I then re-potted the catnip. The existing frost-resistant pot had been damaged by the frost! It was crumbling away and we moved the plant into a spare pot.

That done, we potted up some catnip plants that had seeded themselves in pots containing other plants. I dug the catnip plants out and held them in small pots while Jenny packed them with compost. These were destined for the car boot sale on Sunday.

After lunch, I tended to the cat. She was having difficulty walking. Her right, back leg was giving her a lot of trouble. This was the hip she had dislocated some years ago and which the vet said she had learned to push back into place when it popped out, as it did from time to time. It looked as though the years had taken their toll on the joint.

A sprig of fresh catnip seemed to improve matters a little.

I spent the afternoon wood-cutting in preparation for the winter months, finishing at 5 p.m.

Later in the evening, I resolved the problem with Alcohol 120% on the laptop. Having earlier successfully installed Alcohol 120% on the desktop Windows 7 system for the first time, I concluded the problem was with the laptop system itself. I followed the instructions in the Alcohol 120% web site [FAQ](#) to delete everything and restarted the computer. I did not manually install the SPID layer drivers as stated in the FAQ because a clean installation of Alcohol 120% would do that. That worked a treat.

Somehow, the problem had been with the update I performed.

This did not solve the error I was receiving at log on though.

Thursday, 14th June 2018

I was due to meet Dave Archer for a couple of hours work at the Incredible Edible plot. It was heavily overcast, very windy and the rain started lashing down so I telephoned Dave and we agreed it wasn't gardening weather. Shortly after that, it started to clear and brighten up a little.

I delved a little more into the error message I was receiving on the laptop for a couple of hours and didn't really get anywhere. I gave up and decided to do something more productive.

I started work on Jenny's car booty items that needed attention.

First up was a battery-powered, hand-held sewing machine. That didn't work because one of the wires to the battery pack had broken off the contact and needed soldering back on. That done, it worked fine.

Second was a small, table-top, battery powered sewing machine. The batteries inside were so old they had leaked, decayed and swollen. I managed to prise them out of the battery compartment and then spent about half-an-hour cleaning it. When I did fit new batteries, it worked alright.

The next item was a cross-cut shredder that someone had picked up at the last jumble sale and then dropped before running off. There was a crack in the case of the shredder and it would have been difficult to glue. While looking at it, I managed to break another part of it, lost a bit that had come off and decided to consign it to the junk pile.

Another hand-held sewing machine did not work and that joined the shredder. I kept back the useable, spare parts for future use.

While I had the soldering iron handy, I had a go at trying to repair a crack in the edge of a weight tray from a set of old scales. A small soldering iron and multi-core solder were not really the ideal tools for this job but they seemed to work well enough and I left the tray to cool so I could sand it to smooth the repair at a later time.

I decided to tackle the kitchen tap again. I had bought a thin, fibre washer from the hardware shop in Ramsbottom which had the correct internal diameter but a much larger outer one. I painstakingly cut and filed the fibre washer down to the same outer diameter as the rubber one, which was too thick, that came with the new aerator. That took me about an hour. I fitted the assembled end onto the tap and the screw thread just disintegrated when I tightened it up.

At that point I totally gave up and decided we would have a completely new tap. Jenny then said she would like a new sink as well. The glaze in the sink had cracked quite badly on the existing pot one and it always looked dirty. Jenny said she preferred a stainless steel one.

I had a look online for a decent stainless steel sink and then for a new stainless steel tap. All I needed then was to make sure the new sink would fit into the existing hole in the worktop and find somebody to fit it before I ordered it and a tap to go with it.

That was just about the end to a day less productive than most of late.

The cat continued to be a source of concern, having trouble with her rear right leg, making walking unsteady and jumping onto the settee difficult.

Friday, 15th June 2018

We had a slight change to the usual grocery shop routing with a brief stop at the village chemist for my monthly supply of tablets to keep me normal (some would say they were not working), followed by another one at the Dennis Gore chemist in Prestwich for my Saw Palmetto to keep my precious bits in good order and a run along the scenic route to Unicorn in Chorlton. From

there it was a small journey to Sainsbury's store in Sale and a slightly longer one to Waitrose in Broadheath.

Lunch was barely acceptable at the latter, with a choice of egg and cress or egg and cress gluten-free sandwiches. Still, we needed some sustenance.

We left Waitrose at about 3 p.m., hoping to miss the school run and the jam on the M60. Not a chance.

We had a light tea and made it to the church for an evening of Summer Music just in time for the start at 7:30 p.m., obtaining two of the few remaining seats, surprisingly, in the front pew. The event was presented by local musicians and vocalists who volunteered their performances under the leadership of our former minister, Alan Morris, a Geordie with a wonderful sense of humour and an accent to match, to raise funds for our village dementia café, [D-CaFF](#). The event was most entertaining, takings and the raffle raising £550, with a similar evening planned for November and, speaking with Alan afterwards, he said he hoped to hold these sessions every quarter.

I finished off my evening putting in most of the TV programmes for the coming week

Saturday, 16th June 2018

We were up as usual at 7 a.m., dealing with the cat and I was due to meet Tracey at the Incredible Edible plot at 10 a.m., with the weather looking dodgy. I telephoned Tracey and she was babysitting her granddaughter and said she would call me back when she was free.

While I was waiting for Tracey, I finished off the TV recordings and started an update to the village web site.

It was 11 a.m. when we met up at the plot and we spent a good four hours weeding the flower bed and planting perennials Donna had provided in pots to complement the bulbs already in the bed that had died down.

I brought home the rubbish, dumped it in the bins, put away the tools I had taken up to the plot and had a late snack.

I finished off the updates to the village web site.

Sunday, 17th June 2018

After treating the cat at 7 a.m., we went back to sleep and did not crawl out of bed until 12:15, having slept for almost 14 hours. I couldn't believe it. We must have been absolutely shattered.

Normally, we would have been up at 4:30 a.m. for the car boot sale in Ramsbottom but the weather forecast was not good, so we decided to give it a miss.

Instead, we had planned to go round to the Old School and work on the electrical jumble but we didn't make that either.

I spent the day trying to get to the bottom of the error on the laptop at start-up and the annoying problem with Windows Media Centre not recognising the tuner cards on the desktop when it was first loaded.

The laptop problem I solved and it was something I had done that was just a tad silly. The clue to the solution came when I placed the cursor over the icon for the error in the task bar and clicked the right mouse button. A small message popped up saying something about the canon i990 printer and the light dawned. I had asked the system to load the i990 printer status at start-up. The problem was that the printer was connected to my desktop computer and that was not always loaded when I powered on the laptop so the printer status would not be available. Hence the error appeared. I solved the problem by loading up the desktop, invoking the printer status on the laptop and unselecting the option to start it when the laptop was loaded up.

As for the Avermedia issue, I e-mailed Avermedia.

Rachel arrived early in the afternoon with a present for Farther's Day and Matthew and Carrie called on their way home from Carrie's Parent's (Bob and Marie's) house with their present.

Matthew had informed me of a Flying Scotsman trip from Bury to Hollyhead on 15th September and said that Marie and Bob were going. I telephoned Marie and arranged to meet them so we could all book tickets together the following morning. That would ensure we were all seated together at a table. Bob and Marie were booking First Class, which gave me the excuse to do likewise.

I updated the village web site in the evening.

Monday, 18th June 2018

It was back to normal with the usual 7 a.m. start, catching the 9:43 bus to Bury to meet up with Bob and Marie at the East Lancashire Railway station to book our Flying Scotsman Trip.

We arrived at the station just after 10 a.m. Bob and Marie were already there and we joined them in the shop. The chap to whom we gave our bookings was not briefed on what to do with them but took them anyway. We emphasized we wanted to be seated together and he said that wouldn't be an issue. We weren't convinced.

We walked down to the shopping precinct with Bob and Marie and parted company. They went for a coffee and we went into Poundland in search of some star-shaped labels for Jenny's car boot stall. Jenny couldn't find exactly what she wanted so she tried a few other shops, without success and we headed off to the interchange again to catch the bus to Holcombe Brook.

We arrived at the dentist fifteen minutes early, at 11:45 a.m. The dentist was running late so Jenny didn't go in for her 3-monthly check-up, clean and polish until about 12:10.

We walked home for lunch.

I sorted out a minor problem with a TV recording and caught up with some E-mails.

We went outside to plant out some spring onions and some coriander we had purchased from Unicorn and then we put a net over the strawberries to stop the birds eating them.

I tidied up the borders at the back after the recent storm that had flattened some of the taller plants, including the rest of the comfrey and then decided to tidy up the blackberries that had grown considerably. For that I had to interrupt Jenny's baking for assistance.

I came in about 5:30, having picked a handful of ripe, golden raspberries from the bushes over the fence on the common land and decided to do a little more to move my web site closer to a suitable state for migrating to a hosting service.

Tuesday, 19th June 2018

I mended one of Jenny's three washing lines that had snapped by simply tying the two pieces together and fixed it back up to the hawthorn tree, removing a few prickly branches that were in the way.

I stayed in the garden for a few minutes, fascinated by the bees gathering nectar from the thistle, geranium and blackberry flowers. They had been buzzing all round me when I was tidying up the blackberries and I felt quite comfortable amongst them; they went about their business and I went about mine, being careful not to disturb them.

I came in and pottered around, tidying up, waiting for Jenny. We walked into Ramsbottom, toured the charity shops, finding a couple of DVDs and I purchased a long, thin bolt, nut and two washers to replace the metal peg in one of Jenny's washing-line props. The peg had become detached from the chain that held it to the prop and, being welded on initially, there was no way I could repair it and it was easier to replace it than to ask anyone else to do it.

We came back home on the bus to Longsight Road, walking the last half-mile or so and my first job at home was to fix the prop. The second was a cup of tea and a quick snack.

Jenny went off to prepare tea and I dealt with all the TV recordings on the computer.

Wednesday, 20th June 2018

I spent most of the day on the various computers.

I started off with more of the preparatory work for moving my web site to a hosed service.

I left off that to do something with Rachel's old Dell XPS 170 laptop that was running Windows XP, except it wasn't because it kept "blue-screening", that is failing in a most serious way, when any attempt to load Windows was made. It loaded in safe mode alright and I tried a Windows repair but that didn't work and a check of the system disc just put the load-up process into a loop, constantly running the disc check routine even though it finished successfully.

I toyed with the idea of completely reloading Windows XP and then I had a bit of a brainwave. Why not try loading Windows 7, I thought. So I did.

While that was chugging away, I gave Jenny a lift up to Tottington to go to a Yoga session at St. Anne's Church Hall, which Jenny had heard was better (and cheaper) than the one at the Old School and she thought it might do her aching left shoulder and arm good.

I came back and continued with the Windows 7 installation while scanning another old Datacare document from July 1992 for my web site.

Jenny obtained a lift back home and we had a quick lunch. I finished off the document I was scanning and left off the Windows 7 installation again to nip to Bury to fetch the cat's thyroid medication. Jenny took the opportunity to nip into Holland and Barrett for some blueberry capsules to help her eyesight.

We called at the Old School on the way home to pick up some power supplies from my stock of spares I kept there, one to replace the power supply for my desktop speakers that seemed to have given up life on this planet and one for a battery-operated sewing machine for Jenny's car boot sale, the sewing-machine having an option to use a power supply rather than batteries. We thought that might make it more attractive to prospective purchasers.

Back at home, I continued with the Windows 7 installation on Rachel's old laptop and that seemed work very well except for three issues, all of which were to do with device drivers (bits of software, i.e. computer instructions, that make the hardware, i.e. the physical bits, work). I read on the Internet that some chap had successfully used the Vista drivers from Dell to make his audio (i.e. speakers) work and I thought I would try the same approach for my three items, the graphics hardware (which makes the screen look good, as opposed to the generic driver provided by Microsoft which would do at a pinch), the audio driver and the wireless network card driver.

All three drivers worked well. There seemed to be a problem with the wireless network card losing its signal but it did that when the system was running Windows XP and I suspected a faulty wireless card. I worked round that issue by bringing the laptop into the lounge and plugging it into a network cable for the present.

I left the machine to do the Microsoft Updates, although I did receive a message telling me Windows 7 was no longer supported and I should upgrade to Windows 10.

I didn't like Windows 10. Windows 7 was closer in appearance to Windows XP and it had grown on me. Besides, Windows 10 had no Media Centre, at least, not officially. There was something on the Internet about it being installable in Windows 10 and I did intend giving it a try on the

machine I use for testing at the Old School. If that fell apart, it wouldn't be so much of a problem.

I made considerable progress with the modifications to my web site in the evening and went to bed leaving the desktop Windows computer with a message saying the updates it had applied were 100% complete and just sitting there waiting to finish loading up, Jenny's laptop finishing off a cleanup of the system drive and Rachel's old laptop still searching for Windows 7 updates.

Thursday, 21st June 2018

I managed to drag myself out of bed shortly after 7 a.m. to squeeze gel into the cat's right ear, not that she was particularly looking forward to it.

I then did the rounds of the computers I had left running. The desktop was waiting for its log-in password so I logged into my account and it was working fine. I checked out Jenny's laptop and that was fine and seemed to be running a little faster after the disc cleanup. Rachel's old laptop was still searching for Windows 7 updates, so I quit that and started to look into the problem. Getting nowhere I left it alone for a while and, on returning, discovered it was downloading updates of its own accord so I let it get on with that while I had breakfast.

A few routine chores later, I found the power supplies I had retrieved from the Old School and fitted one to my desktop speakers. They worked fine and I tidied up my desk and closed the back flap that hid all the cables.

I picked out a power supply for the battery-operated sewing machine, tested it and that worked too.

The extra spare power supplies I put on one side for returning to my stock.

Lorna popped round for a chat with Jenny and I prepared some written instructions for preparing the lightweight, foldable wheelchair for use and packing it away again so Jenny and Rachel could put it on the car boot stall.

I tidied up a few E-mails and some discrepancies in my list of DVDs, also watching a short DVD that I helped to produce, called Moorland Magic. Since that was alright, I deleted all of the production material from my account on Jenny's laptop, saving a fair amount of space.

I spent the rest of my time progressing the redesign of my web site.

Friday, 22nd June 2018

The grocery shopping trip down to Unicorn took in a visit to Asda at Pilsworth and, having made an early start, we arrived at Waitrose around noon, expecting to be home early, missing the school run. Everything seemed to be going well and we even found two gluten-free, chicken-salad sandwiches for lunch at Waitrose.

The motorway was running smoothly and we made good time for the first few minutes on the return journey, until we approached the junction on the south side of the canal bridge. At that point it was down to a 5 m.p.h. crawl with the odd stop and start until we passed the M62 junction. We were back up to speed once more, until we had just passed the M61 turn-off, our alternative route home and then everything stopped in all four lanes. We did eventually start to move, slowly. What was so annoying was that, as we were half-way down the hill known as “death valley”, a few minutes from our exit at junction 17, everything speeded up again and there was no sign of any problem, apart from a solitary vehicle on the edge of the motorway that appeared to have broken down.

By this time, of course, we were in the school traffic, which made the journey home through Bury a bit of a pain. The final insult was the road works opposite Bargain Booze in Tottington, where we called for some wine and where parking was difficult at the best of times.

I sort of relaxed in the evening as we watched three episodes of Father Brown I had recorded.

Saturday 23rd June, 2018

All my plans for the day went awry as Jenny had great difficulty in getting out of bed after a restless and painful night. She had severe pain in the right shoulder, thigh and leg. The shoulder problem had been around for a while and was probably due to mishandling a heavy car booty box. The thigh and leg problem was really severe and probably due to her yoga session last Wednesday.

I managed to get her out of bed and help her to dress, persuading her to lay on her back on the Chinese back stretcher on the floor upstairs. That was agony. After ten minutes, I helped her up and she sat for a while in an upright chair from the dining-room in the lounge. The pain eased a little and she was able to potter about.

After lunch, we went for a walk round the golf-course, a walk we used to do regularly in the summer evenings and which we had not done for a long time. This leisurely stroll normally took us about 45 minutes. On this occasion it was double that. It did help Jenny and she was feeling much better afterwards.

Before lunch I spent a good while on the usual weekly update to the village web site. Alistair had sent out his weekly E-mail to village residents summarising what events were coming up during the week end and the following week. Nobody had bothered to tell me about most of the week end events so they were not on the web site.

Before embarking on our stroll, I was looking into the complete box set of last of the Summer Wine again. Universal Studios had kindly sent me a complete list of episodes on the various discs and, at first glance, they all seemed to be there. More checking was needed. As far as running times were concerned, they had thrown the ball back into the BBC's court, stating that they had used the master recordings provided by the BBC, so if there were any cuts in any of the episodes, they had been made by the BBC before the master recordings were issued. I sent the BBC another e-mail.

On return, I listened to Jazz Record Requests on Radio 3. All I could say was the people had some weird, if not obnoxious, tastes in music. Normally, I was lucky if I found 25% of the programme enjoyable. The rest, as far as I was concerned, was complete and utter rubbish and my success rate in having my requests played was about 50%, having made requests 4 in around 7 years. This broadcast was 100% garbage.

I spent the evening installing a spare Logitech webcam I had on Rachel's old Dell XPS laptop, which was easy enough. Then I needed to test it. I didn't have any software on the system to do that so I thought I'd install Skype.

I downloaded that, installed it and launched it. What a shock I had. The interface was totally different to that on Jenny's laptop and that was because the new installation had installed the latest version from Microsoft. It looked absolutely terrible. Microsoft, as usual, had taken something that was pretty good and made a mess of it.

I spent the rest of the evening looking for free web cam recording software. I had loaded Microsoft Windows Live Moviemaker on the desktop. In their infinite wisdom, Microsoft had not only stopped supporting it, they had completely removed it from their download site and I couldn't find the installation files for it on my desktop. I was not best pleased, particularly when Microsoft took every opportunity to push Windows 10 at me.

For Microsoft's benefit, I don't like Windows 10 and I don't want Windows 10. I'm happy with Windows 7 and Media Centre.

I eventually found a free webcam recorder and made a mental note of the web site for morning.

Sunday, 24th June 2018

I was first up, tending to the cat's medication and a bit of grooming with a grooming glove to remove excess hair now that she was not so good at washing herself.

I started the morning chores while Jenny had a shower and then turned my attention to the Dell XPS laptop. I downloaded the software from <http://www.freewebcamrecorder.com/> and tried it out. It was excellent.

After breakfast, the plan was to do some gardening.

Instead, the first job of the day was to trim the cat's claws, on which she was none too keen. Fortunately, they were not overlong, apart from one which was quite sharp and which she had recently been snagging in the blankets and covers on which she laid.

The second task was to look for some organic caster sugar, our usual source being Abel and Cole, the only problem being that we didn't want much more and the minimum order was £12. As it turned out, we ended up with a bill just over £20 and the delivery was on Tuesday, by which time we expected Jenny's to be able to support her sufficiently to do some baking.

Between these two small pieces of work, my sister, Barbara telephoned and we spent quite a while on the telephone chatting. I had been meaning to call her; it was just a case of finding a spare moment.

By the time we had finished chatting and ordering, my stomach was suggesting we had some lunch.

I spent most of the afternoon putting up a temporary web cam in the back bedroom for recoding the window and the view from it when we were out. The alarm had been going off while we were out and we suspected someone had been deliberately throwing something at the window, activating the vibration sensor on the window frame. If the alarm went off and that window was the cause, we would see the sensor light come on and the reason.

We moved the oil lamps off the window ledge and, discovering the window opening mechanism was a little stiff, I oiled it.

After that, we went for a short walk again to help Jenny's back recovery.

Returning home, I tidied up some very old E-mails, some of which resulted in updates to my web site, before tea.

After a relaxing evening, as we were about to retire for the night, I remembered I had not yet published the updates to the village web site, which I did around 11 p.m.

Monday, 25th June 2018

Responding to the alarm just after 7 a.m., being already awake, I gave the cat her morning medication and a groom before washing and dressing. I was first up and washed the pots from the previous evening on another lovely, warm, sunny morning with clear, blue skies.

I update my blog while waiting for Jenny to stir so we could breakfast together.

After breakfast, we tidied up the back of the garage with the objective of beating a path to the chest freezer that was on but empty so we could defrost it, clean it ready for sale again and switch it off. In the process, we also extracted the push bikes. We then spent the rest of the day cleaning and servicing Rachel's push bike before storing all three back in the garage.

Tuesday, 26th June 2018

My day started at 6:30 a.m. with a grocery delivery from Abel and Cole and then giving the cat her medication at 7 a.m.

I cut the grass on the front and then tidied up the drive, removing all the wood for cutting, clearing up the dead leaves that had gathered round it and completely re-stacked it neatly. I put all the wood that was unsuitable for burning in the car, ready for the tip. I also cleaned the rest of

the surface drains. Jenny had been out with Lorna in the morning and returned just as I finished, so we had lunch.

It was too hot to work outside between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. so I progressed the revision of my web site for a couple of hours.

I went out again to sweep the front path and applied weed killer to the growth that persisted after my cleaning of the block paving. I also sprayed the weeds on the footpath at the front and in the kerb edge. I didn't like using weed killer but sometimes there was little choice.

I cut the back lawn and tidied up about 4:30, showered and we had tea.

My day ended at just after 11 p.m., with watering the garden front and back, including all the pots and the raised beds.

We were experiencing a prolonged hot, dry spell, which was set to continue for the rest of the week, thanks to high pressure right on top of the country. I was not complaining though. This weather was most unusual, with temperatures soaring way above the seasonal norm and I was of the opinion that it should occur more often.

Wednesday, 27th June 2018

I was first up at 7 a.m. I went round and opened all the upstairs windows to dissipate the heat on another temperature record-breaking day, washed in cold water and tended the cat.

Jenny was showing no signs of stirring so I washed the pots and moved my web site closer to its new home at a hosting site.

Jenny joined me about 10:30 for breakfast and we went out to pick the ripe blackcurrants, breaking off at 3 p.m. for a quick snack. We spent the rest of the afternoon picking over our fruit and removing the stalks and dead flower ends ready for washing and turning into jam. We finished that about 6 p.m.

I dealt with an E-mail problem for Alistair while Jenny prepared tea. The issue was that E-mails from the Greenmount Village team to recipients with BT e-mail addresses were being returned, undelivered, marked as SPAM (i.e. undesirable messages). After much checking and research I had concluded the problem was either with our hosting site, Zen Internet in Rochdale or BT. As the evening wore on, Zen informed me it was BT and firmly worded messages, not concealing my displeasure, winged their way to BT's Postmaster, including some diagnostics. I awaited BT's response.

I had earlier received an E-mail from BT advising me that their Premium E-mail service was changing and the price was increasing from £5 a month to £7.50 a month from August. However, BT broadband customers could tie their Premium E-mail account to their broadband account for free. I telephoned BT. It seemed that the offer did not apply to BT

business customers, as was I because I had a fixed internet address. I said I would be cancelling my service, which meant that I had to have my web site up and running at Zen before August.

After tea, we went out to water the garden, came in for a cup of tea and then planned our public transport outing to Bolton the following day to fetch some organic sugar from Sainsburys to make our jam. We couldn't get any anywhere else locally.

By the time we had finished that and worked out how to get from the bus interchange to Sainburys in Bolton, it was 11 p.m. and time for bed.

Thursday, 28th June 2018

We went out to catch the 480 bus to Bolton, due at 10:27 outside the church. We arrived at the bus stop just after 10:15 in case the bus was early. There was no shelter so we had to wait in the scorching heat of the sun and, when the bus had not arrived by 10:35, we would have checked the bus timetable to make sure I had not misread it, but there was no timetable at the bus stop.

A bus eventually arrived at 11:34. The only bus we had seen in the mean time was the 480 at 10:43 going in the opposite direction to Bury, the bus operator, ROSSO, having taken the only other route via Greenmount, between Bury and Ramsbottom, the 481, out of service some time ago despite complaints from residents and intervention by local councillors. This was the result of privatisation.

Having arrived at the new, impressive bus/rail interchange in Bolton, we walked the short distance up the road to the large Sainsbury's store for the organic sugar we needed to make the jam and a few other groceries. I had to admit that the store's range of organic produce was impressive and it was fairly priced. There was a limit to what we could carry in the small rucksack on the bus and in the very hot conditions though.

We headed back for the 13:08 bus back to Greenmount, which arrived at 13:16. Eight minutes late might not sound significant but in a busy bus station, where services shared boarding points, it meant that, by the time our bus arrived, another was in the spot where it should have been. Not only did this inconvenience passengers but it also made life difficult for other operators.

We had a late lunch at home before making the jam and finished about 5:30 p.m.

I had an E-mail from Matt's mother-in-law, Marie, to remind us it was Matt and Carrie's 4th wedding anniversary. I was rubbish at remembering dates and relied on Jenny's excellent memory and documentation on the subject, except she had forgotten as well. We whizzed off the Tesco in Bury for a card and discovered Yellowtail Shiraz and Chardonnay were both on offer at £6 a bottle, the same price as Bargain Booze. What made the Tesco offer so attractive was that there was also 25% off six or more bottles, so we bought three of each and a few other grocery items.

We headed off for a flying visit to Matthew and Carrie to give them their card and came home for tea, postponing our visit to the tip with the carload of rubbish until the following morning.

After a quick tea, we spent about an hour watering the garden again.

I had also managed to squeeze in enough time to resolve the problem with the Greenmount Village E-mail and BT's mail servers. It seems that the BT technical team had found someone who knew what they were doing and had unblocked our mail. The only problem was that they hadn't bothered to tell me. I ran a test in the evening and it worked.

Friday, 29th June 2018

Our usual shopping trip was a barrel of laughs.

We started at the tip in Bury, mainly dumping a load of wood we had been given for the fire and could not use because it had been painted.

The vet managed to deprive me of another £30 for the cat's monthly supply of tablets before we headed off to Unicorn in Chorlton.

The M60 was very busy and we hit a stretch of very slow-moving traffic mid-way, which delayed us somewhat. That and the constant use of the air conditioning in the stifling heat increased our fuel consumption considerably.

We found a very tight parking spot at Unicorn, where that parking bays were not exactly spacious at the best of times and it didn't help when people didn't park their cars properly.

Leaving was not exactly a bundle of fun either. There was a large delivery lorry blocking our exit. Fortunately, the bay behind us had become clear and I was about to reverse out that way when another vehicle arrived to take possession. Fortunately, the lady driver rapidly assessed the situation and kindly allowed me to make my exit in reverse before parking.

The trip to Waitrose along the A56 was fine until we were a couple of miles off the turning to Waitrose. We were stuck in two lanes of very slow-moving traffic, due, apparently, to road-works just past the junction where we turned right. There was nothing we could do except sit, wait and crawl until we sped off to the right.

We parked under what shade there was at Waitrose, lunched and completed our shop just in time to join the school traffic taking children home. The run to the M60 was not too bad but the M60 was another long, slow crawl until we took the alternative route home via the M61 and A666 through Bolton.

Before leaving, I had set the computer in the back bedroom to record from the webcam that was positioned to view the back bedroom window. I did the same the previous day while we were out. On both occasions, our alarm was not activated, as it had been during our last few shopping trips. I thought this was very interesting, particularly since the camera was clearly visible through the window.

I spent the evening putting in the TV programmes for the week and, after deploying the sprinkler on the back garden for about 20 minutes, Jenny went out to water the rest of the plants while I carried on working on the computer.

I also tidied up a few administrative jobs and prepared a DVD cover for a full-sized DVD case for one of those free DVDs issued in small card sleeves in the newspapers a while back.

Saturday, 30th June 2018

I was shattered and had a lie-in until about 10 a.m. Jenny was up at 7 a.m. to give the cat her medication and then came back to bed.

I checked my E-mails and the accounts for the month end and dealt with the TV recordings for the previous day as well as the recordings we had watched throughout the week.

I helped Jenny with her car booty and left Rachel and Jenny to finish packing the car while I dealt with a few more PC tasks, such as printing off a DVD cover for *Those Who Dare*, having recently watched a free issue DVD.

I also took out Joani's laptop which hadn't seen the light of day for weeks, charged the battery and applied the Windows 10 updates for her.

After tea I did a little more work on my web site redesign, breaking off briefly to check the car tyre pressures ready for the morning.

Jenny watered the garden.

After tidying up and putting away Joani's laptop, we retired about 10:30 p.m. with a scheduled early start at 4:30 a.m.