

Greenmount – May 2012

Having not slept very well due to tooth ache, we awoke late on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> May and my first action was to swill my sore teeth with a small quantity of Glenmorangie, still in my glass on the bedside table from the previous night.

While taking breakfast and once again in some agony, I repeated the dose of combined antiseptic and anaesthetic and wondered, at that stage, if I could get it free on prescription from the NHS.

The Skype 'phone rang and I had a long chat with my sister Edith in Christchurch, N.Z., mainly about the configuration of Skype! No sooner had that conversation ended than my other sister, Barbara, called from Sheffield and we also had a long conversation, not about Skype.

That had taken care of the morning and the early part of the afternoon.

I then turned my attention to updating the various web sites I run while Jenny disappeared off to her Yoga class. Five hours later, I having spent most of the time updating the village web site, I decided it was time to relax and psyche myself up for the visit to the dentist the following morning with more Glenmorangie, not to mention red wine.

I was up bright and early on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May and, not fancying any breakfast, washed the pots from the night before. It was time to face the inevitable.

I arrived at the surgery before my dentist. I was first in the chair at 9:05 and described my confusing symptoms. My dentist then carried out a physical examination and, after tapping several teeth, decided the problem was most likely a dying nerve in the tooth next to the back of the upper right. It obviously wasn't going to go without a fight. She popped in some local anaesthetic and, after a ten-minute wait for that to take effect, I was back in the chair and she was drilling away like she worked for Shell. I didn't mind, so long as she fixed the problem and, in my position I didn't have much of a say in the matter. All went well until she exposed the nerve ending and touched it, asking if I could feel it. I replied with a respectable "Ouch!" rather than other thoughts that went through my mind. She then proceeded to insert a special filling to calm the nerve followed by a hard-setting topping, which I had to nurse for a couple of hours to allow it to set. I was prescribed antibiotics in case I needed them and asked to return in a week. I couldn't wait.

I was back home for 10 a.m. and rested for the remainder of the day, listening to CDs and such.

Mike called round for a quick chat just before lunch to remind me we had a final planning meeting in the Bull's Head (where else?) the next day for the following week's epic journey to Yorkshire and the first two legs of the Wolds Way. One of our party, the driver, Steve, intended to go early on the Tuesday so we could explore Spurn Point before starting our walk on the Wednesday.

The experience of eating lunch without much pain was most welcome and early signs suggested that my dentist had got it right, but, then, she usually does.

On Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, Jenny and I nipped into Ramsbottom for a wander round the charity shops and we were back just in time for my lunchtime meeting. Two and a half pints later, I was back home, in good time for tea. The things a man has to do.

On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> May we performed our usual grocery shop, calling at Unicorn in Chorlton, Asda Pillsworth and Tesco Bury. Our outward journey commenced with a visit to CK Appliances to find out where our cooker was. Not only had it arrived from the manufacturer the day before but Rangemaster had actually managed to ship the right one this time, which is just as well because I was on the point of cancelling the order, having earlier researched range cooker offerings from other manufacturers. We arranged for delivery that afternoon.

Sure enough, CK Appliances delivered the new cooker and took the old one away and I am quite satisfied with their service. The delivery chaps were very good and had to manoeuvre the very heavy appliances up and down the steep drive, through the garage, onto the back patio and through the kitchen patio doors, for which I provided plywood ramps.

Retailers are at the mercy of manufacturers in this country who have gone one step further than the Japanese “Just in Time” concept and adopted a “Just too Late” attitude. The British service equivalent is “Just Couldn’t Care Less”.

When I compare German manufacturers with British ones, I can’t help wondering how on earth Germany lost the war. Not that it would necessarily have been a good thing. Merkel seems to be trying to even the score though and the sooner we’re out of the EEC the better.

With the cooker safely in my kitchen, I telephoned the plumber and arranged for him to install it on the coming Monday afternoon. I could have installed myself but I am not certified, at least, not yet.

In the evening, I had been invited to attend the Scout Active Support (SAS, not to be confused with another organisation with the same initials) meeting to decide who would be providing help and when to various Scout Leaders who had requested it. It was also indicated that I might consider applying for the position of District Commissioner, being vacated in June. Apparently, the Scout Organisation was welcoming applications from individuals outside the movement, for which I definitely qualify. At the end of the meeting, I was given a neckerchief and a small SAS Badge. I await the sweatshirt.

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May, we spent the morning at the Old School, mainly tidying the jumble in the old Staff Room. We lunched at the Old School (Pasty, mushy peas, two cups of tea and a scone, all for £1.50 each). In the afternoon, I cleaned the floor where the old cooker was and the new one was to be, moved the cooker into position and levelled it by adjusting its feet.

The rear feet were easily adjusted from the front by means of a bolt head on each side. The omission of the central, adjustable, front roller, for moving the cooker was a backward step from the old design. So was the design of the two front feet. The manual advised that the two front feet could be screwed in and out to respectively lower and raise the front. It didn't say how. The damn thing was very heavy and there was no obvious method of turning the screw thread on these. I ended up lifting the cooker at the front and placing wooden wedges underneath, adjacent to the feet so I could access them from underneath. Even then, one of them was so tightly screwed in that I had to loosen it with mole grips. Rangemaster design really seems to have gone downhill, although our cooker is now level, or, reasonably so.

On Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> May, we all went to the Church Parade service, the theme being shepherds and sheep, drawing parallels between the biblical inferences and the four-legged, woolly variety, causing Jenny, to much amusement, particularly amongst her Beavers, to shout "Baa" at a suitable point in the service. One of her former Beavers, now a Cub Scout, was dressed up as a shepherd and looked perfect for the role. It was most entertaining.

Returning home, I set about preparing the plumbing for the plumber by securing the gas feed to the wall in the garage. Up to this point the rigid pipe had been somewhat flexible, creating something of an unprofessional, if not suspect, approach to fitting gas pipes. I knew it was alright because (a) I had fitted it originally, (b) being hidden behind storage shelving, no-one was likely to touch it and (c) it didn't leak at the time I installed it and, as far as I knew, still didn't. If I continue below, you'll know I was right.

On Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May, I walked down the old railway line (Kirklees Trail) to the new bridge over the valley in preparation for the official opening. It was attended by about 300 people, many of whom walked back up the trail to Greenmount and visited the various displays and presentations in Greenmount Old School and the church. My job for the day was taking photographs for the village web site.

Meanwhile, Jenny was enjoying herself in the kitchen at the Old School, where food and drinks were being served, until they ran out, that is. It was packed when I arrived to take yet more pictures.

I had to be back home for 1 p.m. to meet the plumber who was installing Jenny's new toy (the new cooker). That all went well and we were, once again, cooking with gas.

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May was the start of our (Frank's, Mike's, Steve's and my) trip to Yorkshire to walk the first two sections of the Wolds Way, which runs from Hessle on the Humber Estuary to Filey. We spent Tuesday morning travelling and Tuesday afternoon exploring Spurn Head, walking about 7 miles. We stayed the night at the Country Park Inn and Lodge on Hessle Foreshore.

On Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May, we walked from Hessle to South Cave, about 12 miles, where we stayed overnight at the Fox and Coney.

On Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> May, we walked about 14 miles from South Cave to Market Weighton, from which we obtained a taxi to take us back to Hessle to pick up Steve's car and come home.

A more detailed description of our epic journey, including photographs, can be found in a separate document, [The Wolds Way](#).

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May was a shorter grocery shopping day, without the trip to Unicorn in Chorlton. That was because, first, I was due at the dentist at 10:30 for a root canal on my troublesome tooth on the upper right, next to the back. It was 11:00 before I was in the chair and this was not unexpected since I had been squeezed in owing to the nature of my problem. What I didn't know was that it was about to get worse.

The dentist drilled out my tooth, under local anaesthetic as usual, and exposed the nerve. Except that there were three of them. Two she was able to clean out (that's a technical term for removing the nerve), the technique seemingly to be to use a hand-held, small version of a poker. The third one was still sensitive to the touch and she left it well alone, for which I was extremely grateful. Having filled the tooth, I was asked to make another appointment in two weeks' time and to finish the course of antibiotics in an attempt to calm the remaining nerve. Guess what she's going to do next time.

On Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May, we went to help with an Incredible Edible project on some waste land adjacent to the church, between the churchyard wall and the path at the side of the old village post office, now Tan and Tone. The work involved digging a piece of overgrown rough land and levelling it in preparation for raised beds and vegetable planting. A small group of villagers completed about half of the work and arranged to meet up again a week later to finish the task. I wielded my pick and provided bags for the rubbish and Alistair took the rubbish to the cricket club. This might seem strange to some, particularly since we have quite a good village team.

Meanwhile, Jenny, who found the work too difficult, went to see if she could help in the church and then at the Old School.

Alistair dropped me, my tools and empty bags back home and joined us for a cup of tea and a quick chat before departing for lunch.

Lunch was followed by a brief rest before packing the car for the following day's car boot sale. That was interrupted by a request from Rachel for a lift to the tram station in Bury. She was going for a meal with some friends from work in Manchester to celebrate the birthday of one of them.

With Rachel safely on the tram, the car loaded to capacity and its tyres inflated to the correct pressure to support the additional weight, I turned my attention to the back lawn, which had not yet been cut this year and the borders. Half a tub of cat pooh and other debris later and the tools tidied away, we managed tea at about 8:30.

We didn't get to bed until about 1 a.m. the following morning, having fetched Rachel from the tram station in Bury after midnight. That allowed us about four hours' sleep before crawling out of bed in preparation for a day's trading in Ramsbottom.

Business was slow and steady and we made a modest sum. Our profit seemed to be more than wiped out by a strong gust of wind that blew over a metal clothes rack from the pitch next to us that just managed to scrape the driver's door. The lady at the stall was most apologetic and supplied her name and address so that we could bill her for the damage, a six inch scratch and a small dent. The sincerity of her advances were called into doubt when her husband returned and took quite the opposite stance, quoting every excuse he could think of to avoid any blame. I was convinced he was in either finance or politics.

On arriving back home, we discovered Rachel had gone out and left one of the cats, Treacle, in the lounge. Not only had the cat triggered the house alarm but she had also left us a small and very smelly deposit. Fortunately, she had done this on the tiled hearth and not the fitted carpet and, being reasonably solid, it was easily removed. The area was thoroughly cleaned by the expert in cat dung.

On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May, we joined one of the two village hiking parties leaving the Old school at 08:40. The first, led by Christine, had a route planned which was covering about 17 miles. The second, led by Alistair, was walking down to Burrs Country Park, near Bury and back, covering about six miles and, moreover, at a much more sedate pace. Our route took us down the newly-completed walkway and cycle route, along the old railway line, down the Kirklees Trail, over the new bridge, across Brandlesholme Road and down to Woodhill Road, where, instead of following the route all the way into Bury, we turned left for Burrs Country Park.

This was a welcome opportunity for a toilet stop, not having a spade with me. Unfortunately, the toilets at Burrs were closed and locked and so a couple of us made our way to the camping and caravan site operated by the Caravan Club in search of relief. We duly reported to reception as requested by the signs and politely asked if we could partake of their facilities. The lady on duty was kind enough to respond with "Well, I'm not supposed to, but since you asked so nicely...." and so we did, leaving the facilities in the very clean and tidy state in which we found them.

My impression of the site from this brief visit was that it is very nice indeed and a good spot from which to explore the area for intrepid travellers from afar with mobile living accommodation. I guess Bury is not one of those places on most people's list of places to visit with a caravan. All I can say is that it's their loss.

Rejoining the party, we turned left and headed up the valley by the river Irwell, following the footpath to Summerseat and the Garden Centre Café for elevenses at 10:51.

Suitably refreshed, we headed back up the steep hill towards Greenmount, turning left by the Footballers Inn and following the road and bridle track to Longsite Road, crossed the road and followed the path through the fields to Brandlesholme Road. Turning right brought us back up to the village.

We were home for lunch and well in time for the chap who was coming to service my log burning stove and sweep the chimney, due between 3 and 5 p.m.

The chaps arrived, although they didn't look much like chimney sweeps – they were far too clean. Putting down cloths, they proceeded with the task in hand. It took them a short while to discover that the chimney had to be swept from the top (I could have told them that if I had thought about it), which involved removing a fence panel. This, in turn, required our neighbour's permission, particularly since the ladders would have to rest on their path, which was kindly and promptly granted.

The chap in charge, Ian, from Acorn Chimney Sweeps Limited in Burnely, is not just a sweep but also certifies new sweeps for the National Association of Chimney Sweeps and, I believe, comes from a long line of that profession. He certainly did a good job in clearing the flue and cleaning the cowl, which was severely clogged. What's more, he didn't make any mess.

When it came to the stove, he managed to replace the door rope seal for me but, like me, couldn't remove the screws holding the glass in place to replace the seal between it and the door frame. He did say he could heat up the screws and try to remove them but he couldn't guarantee to do this without breaking the glass, which would be expensive to replace. He also suggested drilling out the screws but he didn't have any replacements and suggested I order some in for the next time he comes. Now that's what I call good salesmanship.

The smoke test did not detect any leaks, so the door seals were alright and the second seal replacement was obviously not an urgent task.

The cost for the work was very reasonable and I have a certificate.

To celebrate, the three of us went for an evening meal at the Bull's Head.

On Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May, we dodged the showers and went to deliver the latest edition of the Greenmount Voice, our local newsletter, to residents on our allocated round.

On Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May, I helped Jenny with some Beaver preparation work for the week and also caught up on the documentation for the week I was walking in Yorkshire. That was punctuated by an extended lunch and planning meeting in the Bull's Head, where we arranged to walk the next two sections of the Wolds Way, having decided to complete it in six parts instead of the five documented in the book. I've got shorter legs than the author. Our average speed over the distance is about 2 miles an hour, including stops for meals, to admire the scenery, to take photographs and to resuscitate those who collapse in a heap. And there are plenty of heaps in which to collapse, this being farming country.

It is worth noting that, the evenings still being cold and the central heating now turned off, I lit the fire for the first time for a couple of months.

On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May, we finally got round to emptying the car from the previous week end's event and Jenny spend a good deal of time sorting her stock in preparation for the coming Sunday.

The evening was a bit of a rush, Jenny not returning from Beavers until well after 7 p.m. and us needing to be at the Golf Club for 8 p.m. for the village meeting. We

decided to take the car to save time and gave Frank, who had been helping Jenny at Beavers, teaching them the basics of map reading, a lift. There was less chance of us getting lost.

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> May was the usual grocery shopping day with an early morning delivery from Abel and Cole.

Our first stop was at the Old School to collect a coat which had been left by one of the Beavers on the previous evening, drop off some items for the coming jumble sale and pick up the original Scout Group AGM invitation we had left in the photocopier the day before.

Our second port of call was Tracy's in Bury to exchange surplus clothing and shoes for hard cash before it all disappears into Europe.

We eventually made it to Unicorn where, once more, I am pleased to point out, we spent more than we did at Tesco Prestwich. Tesco is not about to recover from its downturn from our contributions unless it starts to stock the items we want to buy.

We did lunch at Costa Coffee in Tesco Prestwich, which made the day seem somewhat better.

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May we went round to the Old School, where Jenny wanted to look at the plants on sale from Tottington and District Horticultural Society. On the way she called in at Cream to make an appointment to have her hair cut, having turned down my offer to deploy my clippers. Meanwhile, I went into the Old School to test and price electrical equipment for the next jumble sale. Jenny popped in briefly before walking up to the post office at Holcombe Brook, returning about forty minutes later.

We came home for lunch and I went round to help with the Incredible Edible project again at 2 p.m. I helped Tracey take the rubbish to the Cricket Club in her truck and she gave me a lift home, joining us for a well-earned cup of tea and a chat.

We packed the car for another car boot sale the following day, for which we had intended having an early night. Unfortunately, Rachel announced she was going to Manchester again and would like a lift to Bury. The Greenmount Taxi service swung into action and was on call until nearly midnight.

We rose about 5:30 on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May and spent most of the day in the station car park in Ramsbottom. Trading was slow and steady and we managed to move some larger and more costly items, resulting in a reasonable day, particularly as it warmed up and we had some sunshine as the morning wore on. I think the temperature actually managed to get into double figures for a change.

We had intended to have a quick tea of cold chicken, vegetables and potato wedges, until we discovered the right-hand oven of our new cooker was not working properly. Further investigation suggested that either the temperature sensor or the thermocouple had failed, preventing the gas valve from allowing enough gas through to cook anything. We transferred the wedges to the left-hand oven and two hours from starting to cook them, we had tea.

I sent a swift E-mail to Rangemaster telling them about the problem and requesting an engineer to come and fix it.

My experience of Rangemaster, since Aga took over the Leisure operation, is not one I would wish to repeat, nor one to which I would wish to expose others. I am now convinced I would have been much better off having our old Leisure Rangemaster Gourmet repaired and I regret not having done so instead of buying a nice, new, shiny piece of expensive junk that took over four weeks to deliver and now doesn't work properly. If only the Germans made range cookers....

On Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May we were off walking with the Scouts at 9 a.m., leaving the Old School and heading down the lines (Kirklees Trail) to Burrs Country Park. From there we headed up towards Walmersley Road, crossed that and made for Clarence Park, where we called at the appropriate Age Concern café, overlooking the Lido.

From there we were in unknown territory, at least, it was to me. We followed various footpaths in an easterly (more or less) direction, through fields and woods, heading, as I thought, for the Ashworth Valley camp site. The whole exercise was a survey of the route to be used for this year's Group Activity Day. Following a packed lunch in a field, some deviation in our route in the vicinity of the camp site, presumably having achieved our objective (who said Scouting activities were not well planned?) led us into more woodland where the paths were decidedly more heavy going, being very wet and, in places, very narrow with steep banks up to the left and steep drops down to the right, giving one pause for such thoughts as "Perhaps I should take out some life insurance".

At a branch in the path, the majority of our party headed down through the wood, by a stream, to the main Bury to Rochdale road at the junction with the narrow road up to the camp site. There we caught the bus into Bury and then immediately boarded the connection to Greenmount. We were home for just after 3 p.m.

The remaining two of our little group disappeared into the wilderness towards Norden, intending to make their way sort of northwards and catch a bus back from there.

The morning of Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May we spent producing photographs for the display in readiness for the Scout Group A.G.M. Jenny disappeared to Yoga after lunch and went straight to the hairdressers afterwards. I took the opportunity to catch up on some PC work while it was quiet.

On Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, before breakfast, having heard nothing from Rangemaster, I telephoned their support number and arranged for an engineer to come to repair my oven on 12<sup>th</sup> June. I was not happy about this and decided to put it on a back burner for a while.

Frank collected me at 10 a.m. and we went down to Jewsons in Bury to order some wood for the Incredible Edible project in the village. I invited Frank in for a brew and Mike joined us, which took care of the morning.



After lunch, Jenny and I finished unpacking the car from the previous week end's car boot sale, a task we had started earlier in the day and with which she continued while I was otherwise occupied.

Much of the evening was spent continuing the Scout Group A.G.M. preparation. One day we'll get a life of some description.

On Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> May, yes, you guessed it, more Beaver work, then lunch with the lads at the pub while Jenny went to rummage in the tip that doubles as a Scout Room at the Old School. I can't help wondering if she enjoyed herself as much as we did, sitting, eating and drinking in the warm sunshine.

We met up as we were leaving the pub and went to look at the progress Frank had made at the Incredible Edible plot using the wood that had been delivered that morning. It's amazing what you can do with a screwdriver and a saw.

After Jenny had eaten lunch, we went into Ramsbottom to buy some self-adhesive Velcro hook ribbon to use to stick the photographs on the cloth boards for the Scout A.G.M. display. As she closed the back kitchen patio doors to lock them, a piece of plastic fell off and it took me a good ten minutes to find out from where.

Not wishing to bore you with technical details and, having some difficulty in explaining them to the Anglian support desk, perhaps that is very wise, suffice it to say that I finally arranged for an engineer to come and inspect the problem on 25<sup>th</sup> June.

I was not happy about this delay and said I would contact my salesman in Bolton to see if he could expedite matters.

What is wrong with companies these days? Poor quality of goods from Rangemaster, lousy service from Rangemaster and Anglian. Does nobody in this country take any pride in what they do? Do companies no longer value their customers? Answers on a postcard please.

I finally decided to send an E-mail of complaint to the Chief Exec of Rangemaster - much good may it do.

On Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May, I returned to the dentist for what I expected to be the final assault on my upper right molar. She asked me how my tooth was and I told her it had been fine after my first visit and that she must have a magic wand. She said she hadn't - she was just a witch. Witchever it is, I am a lot better for it.

This morning's session was to clean out the third and final canal in the tooth. For good measure, I think she cleaned out the other two again as well. The third one was still a little on the sensitive side and I communicated this with the odd whimper, which is the best I could manage with a wide-open mouth.

As I wrote, I expected this to be my last visit for this course of treatment. I should have known better. The dentist popped in an antiseptic dressing followed by a temporary filling and told me to come back in three weeks. She also explained that I might have a taste of antiseptic now and again for the next couple of days. That turned

out to be something of an understatement as, for most of the rest of the day, it tasted like I had been drinking several pints of mouthwash.

The treatment over, my dentist turned the conversation to a PC problem she was having and I suggested a few ways of trying to fix it. I told her to give me a call if she needed further help and I would go round and try to solve her problem.

The rest of the day was taken up with grocery shopping, another brief affair with visits to Asda Pilsworth, the health food store in Bury Market and Tesco Bury.

After a quick salad tea, we rushed off to the Scout Group AGM at the Old School where we had prepared a display of photographs, etc. to show parents what the Beavers had been doing throughout the year on Thursday and Friday evenings. A few parents actually came along. A couple apologised and said they could not make it. I'm not sure what happened to the rest.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> May was taken up with preparation for the jumble sale on the coming Monday.

We managed another car boot sale on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May in lovely sunshine and we did quite well. My bonus was a sunburnt neck. Having crawled out of bed at 5 a.m. we managed to grab one of the last few available spots on the station car park in Ramsbottom at about 6:45. We were back home about 3 p.m.

I finished the day by cutting the grass on the front lawn, which would have been followed by the obligatory beer had somebody remembered to put one in the fridge.

On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> May we were back at the Old School for the jumble sale. It was not as busy as usual and takings were down on the last few sales. This was attributed to the hot, sunny weather and the fact that people have better things to do when it is so nice. I wish we'd thought of that.

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> May saw us at the bank in Ramsbottom depositing our car boot takings for the last three or four sales and Jenny was struggling under the weight of the cash. Having given all that money in, I promptly took some cash out. That's what banks are for.

Our next stop was at the refuse recycling point in Bury to dump all of the rubbish from the jumble sale.

I spent the rest of the day gardening while Jenny disappeared off to Yoga in the afternoon for a touch of agony. On her return, after a short rest in a chair on the lawn, reading her book, Jenny attacked the potted plants on the patio and gave them and herself a new lease of life.

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> were the second two days of our (the lads') second safari into the wilds, or to be more precise, Wolds, of Yorkshire. I was amongst friends once again. Details are in a separate document, [The Wolds Way](#).