

Greenmount November 2018

Thursday, 1st November 2018

We had a trip out to the Trafford Centre. Jenny wanted some more baking tins from John Lewis and we ended up purchasing a new frying pan as well.

We came home for a late lunch and I spent the rest of the afternoon working on the computer.

Friday, 2nd November 2018

The grocery shopping trip to Unicorn and Waitrose was unusually pleasant, with very little delay on the M60 despite heavy traffic. It helped that we finished shopping early, thanks to a reasonably early start and we avoided the school run on the homeward journey. We were home early which allowed me a leisurely approach to putting in the TV programmes for recording for the coming week.

Saturday, 3rd November 2018

We went to the village drop-in where Jenny helped out, serving customers in the hall while I worked on the electrical items for the jumble sale.

After lunch at home, I concentrated on the revision to the village web site until it was time to go to the Scout Bonfire where the 15-minute firework display was as spectacular as ever.

Sunday, 4th November 2018

My day was one of wood cutting. Having had a fire for the past few days, my stock of logs had depleted somewhat and I needed more logs for the winter days to come.

That was followed by an update to the village web site, lighting the fire and a shower.

Monday, 5th November 2018

I spent the day trying to fix the problem with Jenny's lap top crashing, backing up data in case the worst happened and then working on the revision of the village web site.

Tuesday, 6th November 2018

Since Jenny went to a line-dancing class in Ramsbottom with her friend Marylyn, I took the opportunity to widen the gap between the kitchen tiled floor and the dining-room

wooden floor to enable me to insert the new door trim. I spent most of the day on it and it still wasn't right so it would need another day.

Wednesday, 7th November 2018

It was another day of the village web site revision.

Thursday, 8th November 2018

More laptop trouble led me to commence a reinstallation of Windows when another crash as that was loading led me to suspect the video drivers were the source of the problem. It took me ages to remove the nVidia drivers and purge the system so they did not automatically reinstall when the system was reloaded.

In the event, the drivers did automatically reinstall but an older version, as issued with the system. Where it found them, I had no idea but the system seemed to behave after that. I was about to update the drivers when I read the caveat on the nVidia web site saying that the drivers should not be updated without checking with the laptop manufacturer first. I didn't bother doing either.

I dealt with my E-mails and had a long-overdue conversation with British Gas about my central heating maintenance contract renewal. Had I not done so, it would have cost me nearly £50 or 17% more than the previous year. Having done so, the cost was marginally less than the previous year. So much for customer loyalty.

Friday, 9th November 2018

Instead of grocery shopping, I worked on the computer in the morning and we went to help out at the dementia café, D-CaFF, in the afternoon, where the theme was Remembrance on this 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

Later, we went to an excellent musical evening in church where a group of local musicians had banded together to perform to raise funds for our village dementia café. It was amazing how much local talent we had in the village and how willing people were to help others without a thought of benefitting financially. That is what a community was all about and if more people put others before profit, power and themselves, this world would be a much better place.

Later in the day, it was obvious Jenny's laptop was in a bad way and I decided to reinstall Windows from the recovery media. That was a job for the morning.

Saturday, 10th November 2018

I started off the laptop recovery and left Rachel to feed the four recovery DVDs into the computer in order as required while we went grocery shopping.

I called at Matthew and Carrie's house to borrow Matthew's Dremmel for some precision sanding for the door trim in the kitchen/dining room doorway before proceeding to Asda at Pilsworth.

From there we took the M66 and M60 to Unicorn in Chorlton. There was no heavy traffic on the road but the odd week-end, inexperienced driver more than made the journey interesting.

The A56 took us on to Sainsburys in Sale and then Waitrose in Broadheath where we lunched, treating ourselves to a gluten-free, seasonal cake in addition to our usual savoury chicken salad with rice. Since there was a gluten-free cake on offer, we thought that if we purchased one each, it might encourage Waitrose to invest in more of the same. Not that they were advertised as gluten-free. I formed the impression that there was some fear that the magic words "Gluten Free" might put off people who did not have a gluten allergy from buying them. People needed to be more aware that anyone can eat gluten-free food and that, most of the time, it was impossible to distinguish between gluten-free items and items that did contain gluten by the taste or the texture.

We made good time on the journey back, despite some very bad driving by a minority of road-users and we called at Bargain Booze at Tottington for some wine.

The laptop had happily processed all of the recovery discs and I started to apply Windows updates, which went well, for a while. After a couple of restarts, the laptop was showing signs of reluctance and I eventually had to give up completely. It looked like the disc was failing.

I was up until nearly 2 a.m. trying to recover from the situation, setting up the desktop as my main working machine and replacing Jenny's laptop with the village Lenovo laptop temporarily so we could watch recorded movies on the TV. I also put in the TV recordings on the desktop.

Sunday, 11th November 2018

I wasn't able to do very much on the desktop computer in the conservatory because we attended the Remembrance Day service in the morning. That was supposed to be outside but due to the rain, it was held in church – and it was packed to capacity. I took some photographs as wreathes were laid at the village memorial, just outside the church and we came home.

After lunch, I went down to help Dave Wainwright with a printer problem. We managed to get the HP printer working properly and identified a problem with Dave's mobile phone communicating with the printer which he said he would resolve with the lady who supplied the phone. We settled down to sample a very nice single malt and we had a long chat before I departed to come home and update the village web site.

I made a little more progress with the desktop and had my village E-mail back up and running. That left my personal E-mail to sort out and a load of new material for the village web site to process.

Monday, 12th November 2018

We went to look at the Armistice Exhibition in church. Our church secretary, Neil and his wife had researched and put together a great deal of information about local families affected by World War I and about the soldiers from the village who were killed in battle. It was a most impressive display and Neil was planning on sending me some information for inclusion on the village web site which I intended to place in the Greenmount Local History section.

After that, we took the booking form up to the Duckworth Arms, a J W Lees pub, for the pre-Christmas lunch with Mike, Lorna, Gwen and Frank in December.

We came home for lunch and I started to process the pictures I took of the D-CaFF Remembrance Day last Friday until it was time to go and meet Rachel from work in Bury.

I drove to B. M. Autobodies in Bury and Rachel followed me. Rachel needed a quotation for a repair to her scraped bumper and I needed a price to deal with a rust blister on the hatch cover.

Back home, I nipped to the chemist for my monthly supply of tablets and, this being the last one of the batch, I popped into the surgery to make an appointment to see the doctor. My first choice of the GP with whom I was registered, John Hampson, was not available because he had some leave booked so I settled for an appointment on the 27th November with Tal Wasty.

I finished off the web site picture gallery for the D-CaFF just in time for tea.

Tuesday, 13th November 2018

I started an update to the village web site to include the photographs I took over the week end while Jenny went to her line-dancing class.

When Jenny came back we had some lunch and then we went out to deliver the latest copy of the village newsletter, the Greenmount Voice, together with a leaflet advertising the Cricket Club bar, which has been open to the public in the evenings for several months and the folded leaflet about dementia to residents on our old round in the village.

We returned home to collect the second set of leaflets, advertising the forthcoming Santa's Christmas Cracker at the Old School and a public meeting to try to save a local beauty spot known as Island Lodge from pollution and neglect for delivery to residents on our new round, our estate.

I finished off the village web site update, published the changes and then applied the same updates to the revised version of the web site, still under development. I updated my web site with photos I had taken around Halloween.

Wednesday, 14th November 2018

As Jenny was going out for lunch with Gwen, I tackled the door plate between the kitchen and the lounge.

With the aid of Matthew's Dremmel and one of the two grinding stones for it I had purchased from B&Q, I managed to straighten off the edge of the kitchen tiled floor and, using one of Matthew's coarse sanding attachments, I did the same to the wooden floor in the dining room, creating enough of a gap between the two to fit the new door plate.

That in itself proved a little tricky and I found it best to assemble the whole thing and lay it in place before gluing it to the floor. I prepared the floor surface with some Evostick glue used primarily for bonding wood. I found it very useful for bonding a lot of things! I then peeled back the self-adhesive strip on the base of the assembled floor plate and fixed it in position, exactly where I wanted it. One end had a tendency to lift a little, so I put Jenny's scale weights on it until it set.

I had some lunch while listening to an early morning recording of Beyond Our Ken from 1959 and I was impressed by this one in particular; one of the items was a musical murder mystery and it was very cleverly done, thanks to the script writers, Eric Merriman and Barry Took.

After lunch, I dealt with the post, much of which was rubbish. The one important item was the British Gas service contract renewal which I scanned and stored.

Jenny returned home and I tidied up. I had intended sorting out the trunking covering the central heating pipes in the dining room as well but Jenny didn't want me in her way so I packed up for the day.

Thursday, 15th November 2018

I loaded the template for the new labels onto the desktop computer so I could print out some address labels for birthday cards and subsequently printed a couple.

I decided to have a look at the HP laptop. I removed the old system disc and replaced it with the second disc in the laptop. I successfully reinstalled the system from the recovery media but it wasn't long before it was crashing again. The problem was obviously not a faulty disc. I decided I needed a day or two to strip it down completely, clean it and rebuild it.

Jenny wanted some help with cleaning her oven prior to the baking session for Santa's Christmas Cracker on the 24th November at the Old School. I scraped all of the grease spots off the inside of the left-hand oven door, replaced the door seal on the right-hand oven door and replaced all of the aluminium foil we used to protect the hob surface around the gas burners. The four pieces had to be cut and shaped to fit round the burners. The whole process took most of the day.

I did manage to check out a couple of items for the Old School jumble sale I had brought home to test with the computer.

I also had a quick look for a replacement laptop but finding one as good as the HP was proving difficult and Windows Media Centre was fading rapidly into oblivion.

Friday, 16th November 2018

Our grocery shopping day started at Asda at Pilsworth and from there we drove down the motorway to Unicorn in Chorlton. That was not quite the pleasant experience of the previous week with several impatient motorists exceeding the variable speed limit and overtaking on the left then cutting back in. One driver only just avoided the rear end of the vehicle in front and my front, near-side wing. He received a good dose of horn.

Having finished at Unicorn, I drove up the road a little to Morrisons and waited for Jenny in the car for about an hour, listening to the radio. From there we went to Waitrose and had lunch, with gluten-free goodies available.

The journey home was painfully slow but at least drivers were well behaved, not that they had much choice with the volume of traffic. There were the odd few who risked life and limb by changing lanes to gain a few yards, the issue being that it was not necessarily their lives or limbs they were risking. The concept of leaving a gap still seemed an alien one to the majority of motorists, the mentality being that if you leave a gap someone will occupy it, not realising that was what the purpose of the gap, quite simply to give other motorists room to manoeuvre.

Saturday, 17th November 2018

I went to the Old School for some power supplies to test some of Jenny's car booty Christmas stock, which didn't seem to work and to drop off a few items.

I came home and generally potted about trying to tidy up a bit and keeping out of Jenny's way as she was in the kitchen, bread-making. I didn't make much of an impact and the lounge still looked like a cross between PC World and Steptoe's junk yard.

Sunday, 18th November 2018

With Jenny and Rachel car booting, I intended to tidy the lounge. I didn't make it that far. I spent most of the day working on my desktop computer updating the village web site and dealing with E-mails, including renewing the TV licence and submitting gas and electricity readings in advance of my next bill, due any day.

I managed to make the fire before Jenny and Rachel came back and that warmed the house nicely. It had been a nice, sunny day outside but a strong, bitterly-cold wind had lowered the temperature considerably. To add to the cold, Jenny had to cope all day with a bad back after pulling her muscles while taking off the handbrake. In the end, Rachel having done most of the work, they came home with a fair amount considering it was a cold day.

Monday, 19th November 2018

We spent most of the day unpacking the car booty and tidying up the garage so we could store it all.

When we finally came in, I managed to do a little more work on the village web site redesign before tea.

After tea, we had an evening out at the church where we attended the annual general meeting of The Friends of Huntfold, primarily to discuss the continuance of the contract for cutting the grass on the common land on the estate and to establish the voluntary contribution of residents, which was reduced from £80 per household last year to £60 per household this year. That, the fact I no longer had to cut the grass on the side of the house and the fact that Countrywide made a pretty good job of it made it an excellent proposition for me.

Tuesday, 20th November 2018

Jenny went off to her line-dancing class with her friend, Marilyn. I had all sorts of good intentions, all of which faded into oblivion.

After the usual morning chores, I started looking at some Christmas electrical items from Jenny's car booty, albeit a little late for this year. No sooner had I dismantled one of the items for further investigation when Jenny telephoned requesting a lift home. I went to fetch her and we had lunch.

I spent the afternoon dealing with E-mails and such on the computer and we had an early tea before I went to a public meeting in the church to discuss the state of Island Lodge.

Island Lodge is a large pond with a small, grassy island in the middle supporting a tree. It was built many years ago to support local mills in the Kirklees Valley. The mills have long-since gone and the whole area is now a nature reserve and local recreational facility, supporting a variety of wildlife, including several species of bat. The pond, being the responsibility of Bury Council, has developed a number of issues and needed a good deal of work.

The tree on the island was starting to lean and we needed to know why and to rectify the problem.

A surface drain bringing the only source of fresh water into the pond, despite there being a stream alongside the pond, had started to produce raw sewage. It appeared the problem was due to misconnected drains at a number of properties where builders had wrongly connected the foul waste to surface drains. Most of these had been traced and rectified but twelve remained and, North West Water having identified the properties, this was the responsibility of Bury Council which seemed reluctant to pursue the matter.

The poor water quality due to the long, dry summer, the pollution and the lack of a fresh water supply from the stream had resulted in excessive plant and algae growth and the death of many of the fish, dealing a significant blow to local anglers. The only way to

resolve this issue was to have a run-off from the stream into the pond. It seems there did use to be one but that was built over and was now blocked, something the Bury Council Planning Department did not identify at the time and something about which Bury Council seemed reluctant to act now.

The largest challenge was to repair the dam wall, the cost likely to be approaching a quarter of a million pounds using conventional materials. There was a suggestion of using an older, simpler technique for a fraction of the cost if it proved to be feasible.

It also emerged that our Council Chief Executive earned more than the Prime Minister. My view on highly-salaried people should be familiar to regular readers of these pages but I restate that there is no reason or excuse for such greed and I would not hesitate to cut his salary, making more than enough of a saving to pay for the necessary repairs.

As far as the meeting went, the church being packed to capacity, there was a strong will to see the lodge restored to its former beauty, backed by all three of our local councillors.

It was time for Bury Council to act in the best interests of the people it served not its highly-paid executives.

Wednesday, 21st November 2018

We dropped off a few items at Greenmount Old School before making our way to Bury to collect Rachel from BM Autobodies where she had left her car to have some scratch marks on the rear bumper repaired and re-sprayed. I hasten to add that the damage was due to another driver in a car park while Rachel's car was unattended. Fortunately, the young lady in question admitted the incident and gave Rachel her details, offering to pay for the damage.

We called at Tesco in Bury on the way back where I waited in the car and listened to a new Jazz CD.

Rachel and Jenny were confined to the kitchen and dining area for most of the day, preparing for Santa's Christmas Cracker on Saturday. For the most part, I stayed in the lounge, finishing off the Jazz CD and listening to the morning's recording of Beyond Our Ken from 1959.

I continued working on the computer and then turned my attention to finishing off the Christmas electrical items, both of the latter consigned to the rubbish pile.

I had a brief interlude at lunch-time when I had arranged to collect some jumble items from a lady in the village and take them to the Old School.

I took Rachel down to collect her car before tea.

Thursday, 22nd November 2018

I took my car down to BM Autobodies to have a rust bubble in the bottom, right-hand corner of the window in the boot hatch dealt with. That would take two days since the

heated window glass had to be removed and then refitted. I walked back home up the Kirklees Trail (Cycle Route 6) from Bury, completing the 3 or so miles in an hour.

It was then time for breakfast.

For the rest of the day I was cutting wood for the fire.

Friday, 23rd November 2018

I dealt with administrative tasks on the computer for much of the day while Jenny and Rachel were still making goodies to sell at the Christmas fair.

It was mid-afternoon when they enlisted my help to design, print and laminate various labels for the items they were selling and the stall itself.

I spent the evening alone in the lounge and watched a TV recording of Hannibal while Jenny and Rachel continued working in the kitchen. They were still at it when I went to bed about 1:30 a.m.

I didn't check the time when Jenny finally came to bed but I formed the impression she hadn't been there long when the alarm went off at 6:30 a.m.

Saturday, 24th November 2018

Jenny and I made it to the Old School for about 8:15 a.m. and we unloaded the car with Jenny's produce, setting up the stall. I then came back home and worked on the village web site update for this week while Rachel finished off preparing and packing her goodies for the sale.

I took Rachel and her items round to the Old School and helped unpack them then I left Jenny and Rachel to manage the stall while I milled around with my camera, as I usually did at these events.

Jenny briefly came home to prepare some sandwiches for lunch and I helped Rachel manage the stall while she was absent.

It was a very pleasant day and we did rather well, except for the hamper we were raffling, which was a miserable failure and which we gave away at a loss, eating into our profits. Jenny, wisely, said she would not consider it again.

At home, having unloaded the car, I booked a table for tea at The Duckworth Arms and then updated my web site and this blog.

Sunday, 25th November 2018

It was another day dominated by computers.

I dealt with the TV recordings from the previous day and, later in the day, today. That included listening to yesterday's recording of Jazz Record Requests.

I spent some time looking into a technical problem with Rachel's Microsoft Surface 2 laptop on which the screen detached and could be used as a tablet. The detach icon in the task bar was showing a hardware failure of some kind, although it was still possible to detach the screen using the keyboard detach key and to reattach it. I put in a chat request to Microsoft support and waited online for hours before giving up. Microsoft was utterly useless.

I also published the changes to the village web site and downloaded the photographs of Santa's Christmas Cracker from yesterday.

Monday, 26th November 2018

We started tidying and cleaning the lounge in preparation for erecting the Christmas Tree at the week end.

I managed to update the village web site with the pictures from Santa's Christmas Cracker at the week end as well.

Tuesday, 27th November 2018

I started my productive day with a short session at the Incredible Edible plot, helping to tidy up the beds at the end of this year's growing season. It was brief because I had an appointment to see one of our GPs at 11 a.m., firstly to discuss renewing my daily medication prescription and secondly to check that a new, small growth slightly to the right of my right eye was not anything serious. The small growth turned out to be a wart and I had the option of having it removed using liquid nitrogen. I declined for the present since it was not causing any problems.

I came home for lunch and then we headed off to Tesco at Prestwich for a top-up grocery shop to keep us going until our main weekly shop on Friday, since we didn't do a major grocery shop last week at all.

Back home, we resumed our cleaning and tidying, Jenny having tackled the furniture in the dining room during the morning. The afternoon session involved relocating the grandfather clock from its position between the two lounge windows to the corner on the opposite wall as well as cleaning it. I had to move the two bookcases down by a couple of centimetres to create enough of a gap for the clock and I managed to push them without removing any of the contents. I also managed to pull out the cabinet containing all my LPs, cassette tapes and a good half of my CD collection without unloading it, clean it and behind it and put it back.

Wednesday, 28th November 2018

I went walking with Mike, Frank and Steve. We met at the Old School at 9:20 a.m. and walked down to Vernon Road to catch the bus into Bury. There, we caught the bus to

Rawtenstall and made our way to a café for tea/coffee while we planned the route in detail, the plan being to do a 6½ mile circular walk to the north of Rawtenstall.

We headed out of the far side of Rawtenstall just as it started to rain and turned right to climb up into open country, stopping for lunch under the cover of some trees, not that there was much shelter since the trees had lost their leaves. Although it was cold, dull, windy and wet, it made a pleasant change to be walking again.

After consulting the map several times, we eventually dropped down into Crawshaw Booth, although not exactly where we had intended. Having been there at the beginning of October, I knew exactly where we were and I had a good idea where the path was that would take us up the other side of the valley.

We crossed over and walked down the main road, turning right down the road and across the bridge over the stream to meet the bridleway to the left we needed to take. The narrow road to the right led to the pet crematorium we had visited in October.

For a few yards, the bridle way climbed gently and then took a sharp right turn to go straight up the hillside.

We followed this path up and along the hills until we reached a stile that dropped us directly onto a single-track road. Following that took us into Haslingden. This was not our intended destination and it was clear that our map reading had gone somewhat astray, having covered nearer 8 miles than the intended 6½. Somewhat soaked, we stopped for a hot drink before heading for the bus stop, catching a bus into Bury where we had a meal at the Picture House (a Wetherspoons pub). I was a little dubious about this since I wasn't sure whether they had any gluten-free food. To my pleasant surprise, the chicken tikka masala had a gluten-free option and that was very nice, washed down with two pints of Moorhouses White Witch (not necessarily gluten-free though).

We jumped in a taxi to Greenmount, dropping us off at the Bull's Head pub, from which we each strolled home.

Thursday, 29th November

I spent much of the day cleaning and polishing in the lounge, helping Jenny to prepare for Christmas.

My left knee continued to plague me and a warm shower followed by the application of fresh Aloe Vera gel did nothing to improve matters. Strangely, it was fine while I was walking the previous day.

Friday, 30th November

We were late setting off on our weekly grocery shop, taking in Unicorn in Chorlton, Sainsburys in Sale and Waitrose in Broadheath.

The journey went well, except for the long, slow crawl back along the M60, which was full of drivers who didn't have a clue.

Lunch at Waitrose was very nice, Jenny finding some soup that was gluten-free and a nice piece of polenta cake to follow.

Not a bad note on which to end November.