

Greenmount – October 2009

On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October, being Jenny's evening for Beavers, I was drafted in as a helper to take a contingent of Beavers round Greenmount delivering leaflets advertising the Scout Bonfire through letter boxes. All I can say is that I don't envy postmen.

On the following Saturday, I went round to the Old School with Jenny to the book sale and coffee morning. I was expecting to see the new minister, due for interview. Unfortunately, he was not expected until late afternoon. I had to make do with the removal of a large spider from the kitchen sink, which I safely deposited in the bushes outside and an inspection of the plumbing.

The Old School has had new heating boilers installed and I was invited to go down to the cellar and take a look at the installation. While this is not a pastime enjoyed by all, I found it most impressive. For those with a penchant for plumbing, I can't quite figure why it has two pressure gauges though and there does not seem to be any isolation valves either side of the huge pump, which I would have expected to see. Neither could I work out how the system was filled with water until I was told there is a header tank in the loft and I deduce this must be used to maintain the system pressure.

On Saturday night we took Rachel, Matthew and Carrie for an evening meal at the Wagon and Horses in Hawkshaw, about ten minutes' drive away, to celebrate my birthday. Better late than never. Carrie used to work with the lady who runs the pub and restaurant and Matthew knows her from the time he used to visit Carrie's office. We had an excellent meal at a very leisurely pace and a reasonable price.

A couple of fine and quite warm (in the sun) days at the beginning of October has given me the opportunity to crawl about on all fours on the patio and remove all of the weeds and moss from the block paving. I manage to cover about three square metres a day so the patio and drive should be finished in about three months. My back will probably be finished in three days.

On Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October my services as official photographer to Greenmount Scout Group were once again in demand as I accompanied Jenny's Beaver colony on a visit to the local fire station in Bury. I think the adults found it more interesting than the Beavers, particularly when, towards the end of the tour, the firemen had an emergency call and we were allowed to watch them leave the station with lights flashing and sirens wailing.

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October turned out to be a fix-it day.

My technical skills were called upon quite early in the day as Jenny emerged from the bathroom exclaiming that she could not turn off the tap to the sink. Scrambling downstairs in my dressing gown, a sight to behold, I grabbed a screwdriver from my toolbox in the garage and proceeded to turn off the isolation valves on the hot and cold supply in the cupboard under the sink. After breakfast, I called the plumber and left a message for him, having ascertained that our maintenance contract for plumbing with British Gas does not cover taps. There's a surprise. I was told he would call me back in the evening, which he didn't. Meanwhile, I sent yet another E-mail to Ideal Standard of broken toilet seat fame (see

a couple of months ago), this time to complain about their Idyll (perhaps Idle would be better) tap.

I then had a brainwave. This is a notable event in itself, being few and far between these days. I wondered if I turned the water supply back on whether the problem would have resolved itself or, in laymen's terms, gone away. I did and it had.

My next challenge was the microwave oven, which had stopped working a few days before and, after further moaning from Jenny about not being able to defrost food from the freezer, I decided to take off the cover and poke around (that's an engineering term) inside. I checked all the connections for tightness and looked for obvious signs of a fault, of which there were none. I reassembled the appliance, plugged it in, switched it on and tested it. Lo and behold, it is working again.

After spending the afternoon in the garage with Jenny, tidying up, so that I can squeeze in our car, enabling me to put Rachel's car on the drive, under the car port, overnight, to avoid the windows freezing up, we packed our car for a car boot sale on the following day, had our evening meal and settled down to relax in the lounge. I loaded up Jenny's lap top only to discover her Windows system was corrupt. I managed to repair that by loading it from the original Windows disc.

After a successful day and an early night, we rose at five on the Sunday in preparation for a hard day's bartering at the car boot sale in Ramsbottom. I checked the weather forecast and the rain showers due overnight had seemingly been delayed and were now scheduled throughout the day. We went back to bed.

Instead, Jenny went to Bury for some alternative therapy, with Rachel who was buying some new clothes for work.

My next challenge was the bathroom extractor fan, which had stopped working, yet again. Learning from my previous experience, I crawled in the loft with greater ease, screwdrivers in hand only to discover I needed my drill to unscrew the fan fixings. Leaving the loft was no less elegant than before. I managed to remove the fan, the obstruction that had stopped it working and replace it with only minimal damage to my internals. I took the opportunity, this time, to replace the fan switch on the bathroom ceiling, because the thread in the base for one of the screws was worn and also to rewire the connection so that I can now simply unplug the fan in the loft should I need to remove it again. I can't wait.

On Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> we attended a car boot sale at Elton Cricket Club in Bury. It was a fine, very cold morning and the cricket club was difficult to find, which probably accounts for the fact that it was not very busy. Still, we made a few bob, thanks to one quite expensive item donated, amongst others, by Matthew and Carrie. Moving some stock has created space for the next intake from Jenny's next visit to Sheffield.

My web site has finally made it onto Google. If you search for Ken Dearden on Google you will find "The Dearden Family" and a link directly to my home page. You will also find a link to "Family of James Dearden and Dinah Beighton" if you search for "Dearden Family".

The week end of the 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> saw us at Greenmount Old School for another jumble sale, Jenny sorting and pricing bric-a-brac and toys and me testing and pricing electrical equipment. The sale on the Monday, at which we officiated, made nearly £1800 towards the upkeep of the Old School as a local community centre. We donated some of Jernny's car boot stock that had not sold, offset by the acquisition of an equivalent amount of rubbish from the Old School.

On the 26<sup>th</sup>, I was suffering with a sore nose and throat and within 24 hours this developed into a most thorough bout of influenza, despite the Echinacea tea, raw garlic and malt whisky. I think the last time I had 'flu was over two years ago I don't think it's swine 'flu, though, because I'm not making grunting noises.