

Greenmount - October 2017

Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup>: After treating the cat at just after 7 a.m., we returned to our nice, warm bed and slept on until noon because Jenny had a rather restless night, with her painful hip, some abdominal discomfort and feeling cold and was tired.

The first job was to check the laptop I had left running a virus scan the previous evening was alright and it was. I packed that away.

The pressing task of the day was to fix the bathroom door handle and removing the fitting took a good while, requiring a lot of patience and the application of a flexible gripping tool Jenny had for opening stubborn jars and such. Once dismantled, I applied superglue to both the glass knob and the metal shaft onto which it fitted, having placed the plate that screwed onto the door on a flat surface with the shaft vertical, relying on the weight of the glass knob to hold it firmly in place until the glue set. I decided to leave that overnight.

Despite her painful hip, Jenny helped me manoeuvre the three staircase rails out of the conservatory and into position so I could screw them back in place. Although Jenny suggested I give the wooden staircase another coat of gloss varnish, I had decided that would be better done with the rails in place, at a later date.

It was, in effect, another small step towards completion of our decorating project.

I performed a brief update on my web site, publishing the previous month's update and a small cosmetic update to the village web site, publishing a list of this week's dementia-friendly activities in the Bury area, sent to me by a colleague and a modification to the DeCaFF poster for our village dementia café. That involved taking an existing PDF document, copying it to the Windows Clipboard (a facility within Adobe Reader), pasting it into Adobe Photoshop and modifying some text using a combination of tools (cut, copy, paste, erase and text). This was to add the new (second) monthly café on the fourth Tuesday of the month, commencing this month, to provide a quieter gathering than the one on the second Friday of the month for those who preferred a more subdued environment, not that anything Joani devised would be dull – far from it. Once modified, I printed the Adobe Photoshop finished document using a PDF printing tool, updating the web site with the revised version.

Monday October 2<sup>nd</sup>: It was not a very productive day on the domestic front.

I replaced the door knob on the inside of the bathroom door before breakfast and Jenny remarked that it seemed easier to open than before and asked if I had oiled the mechanism, to which the reply was yes.

Much of the day I spent on the laptop.

Firstly, I gave Anglian an ultimatum: either fix my conservatory by the middle of this month or cancel the order and give me a full refund.

Secondly I gave my feedback to James Frith MP, our new Labour representative in Westminster. He had sent me a questionnaire to complete and he probably got more than that for which he bargained.

Thirdly I performed a rather time-consuming update to the village web site.

I broke off that briefly to go out and tie down the plastic sheeting covering the hole in the conservatory roof to prevent water penetration. It had broken two of the six strings holding it in place during the high winds overnight and I took the opportunity of a brief dry spell, with Jenny's help, to tie it back down.

Tuesday October 3<sup>rd</sup>: After coughing and spluttering for most of the previous day, I had a surprisingly comfortable night's sleep and woke briefly at 7 a.m. to turn off the alarm. The cat had a bit of a reprieve until about 8:40.

I was still coughing and had pain in my upper and right side of my chest. I had until now put my coughing and catarrh down to an allergic reaction to the cat. I was now thinking there was something more serious going on and it was probably related to the fall I had when I banged the right side of my chest, just below the breast, on the vertical wooden post at the bottom of the stairs as I went down. It all seemed to ease a little after a shower.

We decided to walk into Ramsbottom as the grey clouds and rain gave way to a brighter day with sunny periods, tempting Jenny to hang out her washing first.

Contrary to the weather forecast, we did encounter a few light showers on the way but it was not unpleasantly wet.

I called to pick up my new spectacles and then we went for lunch at a small café called "54". The menu in the window said that gluten-free bread was available. We had a very nice lunch and Jenny realised she knew the lady who ran the café. The lunch proved to be on the expensive side, though.

We toured the charity shops and Jenny bought a dress for the Halloween theme at D-CaFF, the village dementia café on the second Friday of the month.

We scoured Morrisons and then Tesco without success for a pack of dinner candles before catching the bus back to Longsite Road and a short walk back to Greenmount.

At home, I caught up on some administrative work, dealing with telephone messages, mail and so on.

Wednesday October 4<sup>th</sup>: A late start yet again gave me just enough time to wash the pots after breakfast before I had to leave to meet Joani for another Dementia Awareness and Dementia Friends session at Nazir's business premises just up the road.

That went well and I was home for about 2:30 for a late lunch.

I spent a couple of hours on the Radio Times crossword since I didn't feel too well and then perked up enough to clean the fire and warm it ready for the evening's use.

After an early tea, I lit the fire before going to the Village A.G.M. and meeting, returning about 9:30 p.m. to a nice, warm, cosy living room which was much better than the cold, windy, very wet night outside.

Thursday October 5<sup>th</sup>: We seemed to be sleeping in quite a bit and it was another latish and leisurely start to our day. The weather forecast for the day, as of yesterday, was for a good, dry day with some sunshine.

After washing the pots, I took out the recycling rubbish, this having piled up because it had been too wet to stand outside sorting it into the various bins. It was then I noticed the polythene sheeting on the conservatory roof, covering the damage to the finial, had come adrift again. The four strings I had not renewed a couple of days ago had broken and needed replacing. That was my next job, with which Jenny helped, in between putting out her washing and fetching it in again, when it started to rain. (I subsequently discovered the weather forecast had changed).

After that, I discovered Jenny had been digging in one of her raised beds, removing some fungi that had been growing in it. I finished the job, turning over the bed and also weeded and turned over the other one. The herb bed was still full of herbs so we left that alone. We really needed some fine weather to get out into the garden and tidy it up before winter.

We tootled off to Bury to dump a car load of rubbish at the tip, collect the cat's renal tablets from the vet and make the usual, obligatory call at Tesco, returning about 3 p.m. for a late snack.

I had a look at an E-mail Dorothy (our Mayor) had sent me advertising a charity event. She had asked at the previous evening's village meeting if the event could be advertised on the village web site and the A4 print of a poster she had given me for it was a little blurred so I had asked her if she could send me the original, electronic copy. Unfortunately, the image was quite small, so I contacted the originator of the message to Dorothy and she sent me what she had, which was the same image. We spoke on the telephone and she was going to ask the person who had produced the graphics if she could send me an A4 PDF copy of the original.

Richard Greenwood called round with some wooden floor samples and we chatted briefly. We decided to go down to the local stockists with which he dealt and have a good look at what they had, then let him know which we would like for the dining area. It wasn't going to be cheap at prices starting from around £60 plus VAT per square metre.

I went out to cut up and chop some wood for the fire for a couple of hours or so and filled two wooden crates in the garage and the bag we use for feeding the fire in the lounge. That was enough for at least three to four evenings. The plan was to continue cutting and chopping when I had a couple of hours to spare.

That took me up to beer time.

Friday October 7<sup>th</sup>: We went on our usual shopping trip to Unicorn and Waitrose, calling at Asda on the way. Setting off early meant that we had a clear run down and, missing the school run, most of the way back. The one noticeable incident was a police van, not using its "blues and twos", which firstly overtook me when I was travelling at 30 m.p.h. in a 30 m.p.h. limit and which must have been doing at least 35 m.p.h. and secondly sped down the right-turn only lane, passing a long queue of traffic in the left lane and then proceeded to push into the left lane as it approached the traffic lights. I ask you, what

sort of example was that setting to drivers? Police drivers are not exempt from prosecution under the Road Traffic Act, even when using their emergency lights and siren and on this occasion, there was at least one transgression under the Act.

I spent the rest of the afternoon putting in the TV programmes for recording for the week ahead.

Saturday October 8<sup>th</sup>: We stayed up after treating the cat at 7:15 a.m. and I went to the local medical practice for a 'flu jab, scheduled for 8:46 a.m. While I was there, the nurse asked me if I wanted the one-off pneumonia jab as well, so I came away with puncture marks in both arms.

From there, I joined Jenny at the monthly drop-in at the Old School and spent the morning testing and pricing electrical equipment for the coming jumble sale, making one sale of a printer that had come in that morning for £20.

We came home for lunch and I then spent about three hours cutting wood for the fire.

Meanwhile Jenny baked some bread and made the fire despite the mild 'flu symptoms that had plagued her all morning developing into a full-blown infection.

The intended tea of beef stroganoff was abandoned and I had a very tasty plate of bacon and egg.

As the evening progressed, I started to ache and the pneumonia injection site had become quite red and painful, as expected.

I had managed an update of my website and of the village web site before retiring just after 10 p.m., Jenny having preceded me.

Sunday October 8<sup>th</sup>: Neither of us was in a fit state to do much. Rising from the bed, washing and dressing proved something of a challenge. I had briefly struggled out of bed just after 7 a.m. to give the cat her dose of thyroid gel at 7 a.m. and immediately went back under the covers with what seemed like a wire brush at the back of my throat.

It was turned 10:30 a.m. by the time we were downstairs having breakfast and, outside, a seemingly much nicer day than previously forecast, although rain was due in the afternoon, not that it made much difference to us invalids.

We had missed Andrew's last service as minister before he retired and he and his wife, Kath, were going to live in Yorkshire. It was, I thought, a wise decision, not that we wouldn't miss them.

I spent my day tidying up my E-mails and dealing with a lot of messages that were not urgent at the time they arrived, resulting in a huge workload, not least a major update to the village web site yet again.

The rain that was forecast for the afternoon didn't mature and it turned into a nice day with sunny periods. It was just the sort of day when one should be out doing a car boot sale instead of nursing 'flu symptoms.

I finished off with an update to my web site and tidying up my video media before staggering off to bed.

Monday October 9<sup>th</sup>: I had a very restless and uncomfortable night. The cat had its ear gel an hour late and we continued to doze in bed for a while.

After breakfast and the usual pot-washing session, we headed off to Bury to look at wooden flooring. We later settled on 14mm thick, oiled, solid oak, 140 mm wide planks from Howden.

We dropped off some rubbish from the Old School at the tip and came home - without calling at Tesco.

After lunch, I sorted out a load of TV recordings, interspersed with speaking to Richard about the flooring and sorting out the prices for Jenny's pickle for the Christmas fair.

Richard called round to discuss the flooring and advised me that his supplier could not beat the price I had for the radiators. Richard was going to order the flooring and I said I would go down and pay for it. I also said I would order the radiators.

Before placing the radiator order, I sent an enquiry to the sales desk to make sure I was ordering the correct items. I also discovered the lead time on the radiator for the dining room was six weeks. Since the flooring had to sit for at least two weeks in the room in which it was being laid to acclimatise, we needed the radiator on first. If the lead time for the new radiator could not be improved, it might be necessary to cobble something together to make the old radiator work temporarily.

It was obvious we were going to be pushing it to be straight for Christmas.

When I finally selected the items I wanted from the web site and went to the checkout, there was a subtotal, followed by a line adding VAT and then a grand total. I took it that the prices on the website did not include VAT and I had previously misled Richard and his supplier by telling them that they did. I decided to hold the order until I had spoken with Richard.

Tuesday October 10<sup>th</sup>: I had a very restless night again and I decided to get up about 8 a.m. since I could breathe better in a vertical position. Jenny stayed in bed a while and I set the table for breakfast and washed, wiped and put away the pots and pans from the previous evening. I settled down in my chair in the lounge and finished this week's Radio Times Crossword, having done most of it in bed the previous night.

Jenny came down after her shower and we had breakfast, after which I telephoned Richard and arranged to go and talk to his plumbing supplier, John Burke at K J Plumbing in Bury.

Jenny and I went to see John and had a chat about prices. He said he would see what he could do during the afternoon and ring me. He did so while we were in Tesco to ask me what the web site was from which I had obtained my prices and to tell me that the subtotal on the printout of my basket did not match the price of all the items on the list. I said I would telephone him back with the information when I reached home.

At home, I checked the basket. John was right. The subtotal on the basket did not match the sum of the prices of the individual items. The grand total, with VAT added, did though. I had been right in the first place. The web site prices did include VAT. The subtotal on the basket was the total cost without VAT. The way in which the prices in the basket were presented was, I thought, quite misleading (to my logical mind, anyway).

I telephoned John and he agreed with me about the way in which the subtotal and total had been calculated, he took the details of the web site and he said he would be in touch. John had also told me earlier that the large radiator was in stock, while the chap at the web site had E-mailed me to say delivery would be six weeks.

“Wasn’t life confusing?” I thought.

I also decided to telephone Anglian and I looked in my contact list for the number. I came across a mobile number for Abid Hussain, the chap who had sold us our first Anglian installation decades ago and I rang it. Sure enough, it was Abid and he was still working for Anglian. He said he remembered me (once seen, never forgotten) and I explained the problem of having placed the order nearly three months previous and nothing had happened. He said he would call me back and did so in a few minutes to say that someone would telephone me this afternoon. The last time I had spoken with Abid, he was in a rather senior position with Anglian so I was hoping that he had enough influence in the company to stir a few people into action.

Wednesday October 11<sup>th</sup>: After a very disturbed night of almost ceaseless coughing, I awoke expecting to find bits of my bronchial system on the ceiling. As it was, the pile of handkerchiefs I had used showed no sign of discolouration and, more importantly, no traces of blood. I still felt lousy though and my coughing continued until the afternoon, when it seemed to ease off a little. Dare I suggest I was starting to feel better towards the very end of the day? Another night would tell.

I telephoned John at the plumber’s merchants in Bury and he said he was waiting for his sales contact to let him know if he could obtain the radiators I wanted at a higher discount. As it stood, he was 15% more expensive than the Internet company I had found, which, I subsequently discovered, had a showroom in Stockport.

I dealt with my E-mails, the most important one being from Anglian to inform me that my conservatory parts would be arriving at their Stockport depot on the 17<sup>th</sup>. I wasn’t holding my breath. I replied telling my contact I expected a telephone call on the 17<sup>th</sup> to arrange installation.

Another important message was from Greenpeace. It seemed that the Norwegian Government wanted to open up the Arctic for new oil drilling. Greenpeace was instigating legal proceedings to stop the project and was asking for an increased donation. I ignored that request and, instead, decided to write a letter on the subject for publication in the Norwegian national newspaper, Aftenposten, calling for all Norwegians to act, peaceably, to oppose the move. Unfortunately, I didn’t know a great deal (zero, in fact) of the Norwegian language or grammar. Rather than rely on an online translator to put my written English into written Norwegian, I decided to try to find someone who knew the language. My search later proved to be unsuccessful.

I had a chat with my sister, Barbara on the telephone about my decorating progress (or lack of it) and then watched an old recording of a Kenny Everett show, followed by Pointless on BBC 1 and Eggheads on BBC 2 to pass the time, since I liked quizzes.

Jenny brought me a hot toddy comprising lemon, thyme, honey and whisky. That seemed to help my throat and cough and I had a second. The third was all whisky. If that didn't help my illness, at least it took my mind off it.

That, lighting a fire, documenting today's events thus far and squirting gel into the cat's ear for the second time today took me to tea time.

Thursday October 12<sup>th</sup>: After a better night, waking a couple of times, briefly, I woke about 10 a.m. My coughing seemed to be subsiding, although I was not entirely free of it and when I did feel the need, my innards felt like I had suffered a really good kicking. My diaphragm, in particular, was very painful.

Another good sign was that I was not using so many handkerchiefs and my phlegm was still clear, so I didn't think there was any viral infection in my lungs. My breathing was easier too. Maybe, just maybe, I was on the mend at last.

On the other hand, my head was full of mush and I was still tired. It was a nice day and I would have liked to have gone out a bit for some fresh air but Jenny had made arrangements to meet Gwen and I didn't think it was a good idea to go out alone, feeling as I did. We had some Jumble Sale leaflets to deliver and Jenny said we might do that when she came back, later this afternoon.

After breakfast, I dealt with the post, the main item being the Denplan dental fees for next year. These were increasing by 4.5% following a 4.3% rise the previous year. How our dentist could justify those increases would be a subject for discussion when I saw her next month for my filling.

I read my E-mails and replied to one from our village Chairman in reply to one I had sent to him the previous day about a lathe our neighbour, Doreen, wanted to sell before she and her husband moved to Cornwall.

Not having heard from John about the radiators, I was about to place the order with A1 Radiators online when John telephoned to say he had made progress with his salesman and needed another day to clinch the deal to match the A1 price. I said I would wait, preferring to do business with him.

I was thinking that I would temporarily reinstate the old radiator in the dining area if the lead time on the new one was six weeks. That would give us our heating back and provide acclimatisation for the wood for the floor, which could then be laid in a few weeks' time.

I rang Richard to update him.

Jenny returned about 3 p.m., just as I had prepared my late lunch, leaving off some updates to my web site, involving scanning some old documents.

I continued my scanning afterwards, interrupted around 5 p.m. by a visit from a chap called Robin Hunter, a relative of one of our neighbours and, being a wood turner, involved in the Greenwood Project. (The project, based in Prestwich, was initiated some months ago and involved volunteers introducing young people who needed some direction in life to wood working and wood turning, the raw materials being generated by the Greenmount Woodland Management team.) Robin was interested in the lathe Doreen had for sale and Jenny took him round to view it.

On Jenny's return, I finished off my work for the day and we had tea.

Friday October 13<sup>th</sup>: I awoke about 3:30 a.m. to discover I was lying on my back in a very damp patch under my rear end. Further examination uncovered the hot water bottle that had been underneath the bottom of my back and the conclusion was that it had leaked. I was not best pleased.

We changed the bed-linen and turned the mattress before resuming our slumbers. Apart from a brief awakening at 7 a.m. to treat the cat's ear, we slept through to about 9:30 a.m.

Jenny was in the shower when I awoke and, despite feeling rough, I went in afterwards. It was going on for noon before we were on the road to Unicorn and Waitrose. The very late start had given the traffic time to thin out and we had a comfortable journey down. The school run had been and gone by the time we returned and, despite the slow crawl from joining the motorway to the canal bridge, the return trip was not unpleasant.

John from the plumber's merchant called while I was driving and I spoke with him when I arrived home. We agreed a price for the radiators and the valves, the latter revised to swivel, thermostatic valves and John placed the order. The good news was that both radiators were on a short lead time and were expected by next week.

I had a call from Frank, also expressing an interest in Doreen's lathe.

I finished off my day by putting in all the TV recordings for the week.

Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup>: Still feeling tired and unwell, I spent my day updating the village web site and then adding more information to the development version of my web site.

I did take ten minutes out to light a fire about 4 p.m., since I was feeling the cold.

Steve, our builder, telephoned to say he would be dropping off some scaffolding tomorrow, in preparation for retiling the roof.

Sunday October 15<sup>th</sup>: After a restless night again with my cough returning, we slept in until 10 a.m.

I commenced a reworking of my web site. I abandoned the use of relative positioning of objects using HTML DIV and P commands because I could not generate the presentation I wanted. I hit on the idea of treating the web page as a huge table and, using TABLE, I was able to manipulate the cells within the table (a bit like a spreadsheet) to give me exactly what I wanted with text and graphics placed where I wanted it to the pixel.

That was interrupted by the arrival of Steve, our builder, who had brought the scaffolding to erect in preparation for the replacement of our roof tiles, later in the week.

A later interruption occurred when Jenny suggested a walk in the pleasant, fresh air to deliver the jumble sale leaflets to local residents, which was a good idea even though I felt rough.

I made slow progress with the web site and there was a great deal of work involved.

Monday October 16<sup>th</sup>: What a depressing day. Heavy cloud gave the sky a dull orange tint with little light. It was a little windy and very warm with a southerly breeze and very damp underfoot.

I had a small whisky on retiring the previous night and finished it off in bed, sipping it after each time I coughed. I had one of the best night's sleep I had experienced for a while. My cough was still with me when I awoke but I did feel a little better.

It was after noon before I was firing on all cylinders and I went out, intending to cut the grass on the side. It was covered in leaves and the first job was to rake them up. It took me 2½ hours to clear the leaves, filling the brown waste bin and two 1 tonne sacks in the process.

I came in for a late lunch at 3 p.m. and decided it wasn't worth starting on the grass because Joani was collecting me at 5:45 p.m. to help with a Dementia Awareness presentation to a group of Brownies in Tooting.

I did a little work on my revised web site, starting to improve the pages I had already rewritten.

I decided to cut my hair, with Jenny's help and trim my beard before having a shower and changing in readiness for Joani, who arrived early, at 4:30.

John from the plumber's merchants telephoned to say that the large radiator I had ordered was not in stock and would be six to eight weeks. That did not come as a surprise, although it was a disappointment.

The presentation went well enough, being a change from the usual one, since this was for children rather than adults.

It was 7:30 p.m. by the time I was home and Jenny had prepared a nice beef stroganoff tea, which I enjoyed after treating the cat with her usual thyroid gel.

Tuesday October 17<sup>th</sup>: Steve, our builder, telephoned about 8:30 a.m. to say he would be here first thing in the morning to start work on the roof.

We started off with a trip to the tip, taking the two 1 tonne bags of leaves from the previous day. While the bags were bulky, they were not heavy and we managed to dump the leaves in the garden waste recycling skip.

I spent most of the day cutting the grass on the side. It was hard work and heavy going, not having been cut for a while because of the long spell of wet weather. Since I had

almost filled the garden waste bin with leaves (before using the 1 tonne bags), I ended up putting most of the cuttings and debris the mower collected into plastic bags.

I spent a little time working on the revision of my web site.

I telephoned Richard to discuss progress (or lack of it) at lunchtime and left a message on his mobile. Since he hadn't called me back, I telephoned him again at 6 p.m. and left another message. I also tried his office number, to which there was no answer. I assumed he was either taking some time off or he was ill. I just hoped he hadn't caught my 'flu.

I had a quick shower and Richard telephone me during tea. He had been busy and had left his phone in the van. I updated him and he said he would sort out the wood order. It was going to be a couple of weeks or so before he could get to me.

Wednesday October 18<sup>th</sup>: We were up at 7 a.m., not only to treat the cat but also because we were expecting Steve, the builder to start work, replacing the roof.

Steve and his chums arrived as we were having breakfast and continued to work on the roof while we nipped into Ramsbottom, mainly for some birthday cards from the card shop there and we dropped one off for Jenny's friend, Karen, before returning home for lunch.

After lunch, I tore into Anglian Home Improvements since my morning call about my order to repair the conservatory finial seemed to be going nowhere after three months and having paid up front for it. I sent an E-mail to my contact in Customer Services and then browsed their web site for a complaints procedure.

It was while doing so that a Chat box popped up asking me if I wanted a quotation for anything. That was too good an opportunity to miss. I let whoever was on the receiving end have both barrels. Whoever it was passed me on to someone else and they said they would chase it up immediately, which was fair enough but didn't solve my problem – or get me a refund.

I sent a message to the Glass and Glazing federation, of which Anglian is a member. I didn't think it would do much good but it was worth a shot. I had given Anglian by close of business today to refund my money or set a date for installation within the next two weeks. My next step would be to contact my bank, since I paid by credit card.

I was also thinking that, if Anglian had taken my money and not delivered that the transaction could be considered fraudulent.

I turned my attention to my web site redevelopment for a short while then left off to light a fire and to put the old radiator back on the wall in the dining room. Jenny helped me manoeuvre it into position and I caught Steve, the builder, just before he finished for the day, to give me a lift with it onto the brackets.

Connecting it back up was a pain, largely because it was fed with both flow and return pipes from one end, which meant that the flow had a long, flexible extension that protruded well into the radiator to prevent the water short-cycling (i.e. returning as quickly as it entered) which would mean the radiator never warmed up. Under normal circumstances, the protruding bit would normally simply slide into the radiator but, being

a double one, the internal water chamber was offset and the flexible pipe had to be manipulated into position while making sure it was still firmly attached to the valve inlet. It struck me that plumbers should read/view the Kama Sutra.

Once connected, the screw thread on the valve being suitably coated with PTFE tape first, I let in the water and that plunged the system pressure down to zero. I had to go into the garage and open up the boiler valve to allow more water into the system, bringing up the pressure to 1.5 bar. I then finished off filling the radiator and went round checking the others and filling them as necessary, before topping up the boiler water pressure again.

With the heating having been switched on for about half an hour and the first time for months, I went round and checked the radiators. Everything was working fine. I switched the heating back off, since the fire was keeping us warm.

It was 6:15 before I had finished for the day.

Thursday October 19<sup>th</sup>: We were up just after 7 a.m. again. Steve and the lads arrived for an early start.

I spent a little while working on the revision to my web site, breaking off to wash the pots.

I read the meters for our energy supplier and submitted the readings online. The garage was unusually light when I went in and that was because the roof was open to the elements. The chaps had ripped off the old tiles and felt and I was hoping that they would cover it all up again before the rains came.

I spent the rest of the day undercoating the door jambs on the landing and in the dining area and also the loft access architrave, ready for glossing.

Outside Steve, Paul and Martin were hard at it on the roof and just managed to get all the new felt in place in time for the heavy and persistent rain in the afternoon, in which they continued working. Having the felt in place meant that at least we were waterproofed and, although the rain sounded nasty and there were some sounds of running and dripping water, there was no sign of any leaks, thank goodness.

I finished about 6 p.m.

Friday October 20<sup>th</sup>: We woke about 6 a.m. and snoozed on until 7 a.m. The cat was treated with her thyroid gel and we both had a quick shower. By the time we were having breakfast, the chaps had arrived with an additional member and three of them were busy on the roof while Steve nipped off for a short while. Jenny made them a brew as usual.

We went off to Unicorn at about 10:30, somewhat later than intended. The journey down was not bad and we were on our way to Waitrose by noon, where we lunched as usual before shopping, although Jenny had her home-made sandwich on the way there since gluten-free food on the go at Waitrose was about as common as rocking-horse droppings. I didn't think "Celiac" was in the company's vocabulary, let alone understanding.

Leaving Waitrose at about 2:45 p.m. I thought would have guaranteed us a trouble-free journey home and all was well as we joined the M60 – until we approached the bridge over the canal, when everyone slowed down considerably. By the time we reached the junction with the M62, we were at a crawl, although, strangely, just after the junction we were back up to the temporary limit of 50 m.p.h. It didn't last. It was another painfully slow crawl up to the junction with the M61, after which the M60 traffic seemed to be stationary in all lanes. I was fortunate enough to be able to work my way across from the right-most lane to the left-most lane and take the M61, then the A666 towards Bolton, leaving to join the A56 to Bury. That was a mistake. The A56 was jammed up as well. We did manage to make reasonable time, though and I cut across through Ainsworth and Walshaw, using the back roads, to come home via Tottington. Along the A56 I couldn't help thinking we might have been better staying on the A666 and coming back through Bradshaw, although that would have taken us a little further west and it was a longer way round.

The first job after bringing in the groceries from the car was to brew up for the chaps, who had been working hard all day and had finished the house roof, with just the tiling of the garage and kitchen extension to complete, apart from one or two minor bits like fitting the end caps on the roof verge and sorting the leaks and missing end cap on the guttering.

Another extra piece of work was to replace the lead flashing at the back where the kitchen extension met the house wall.

The chaps would be back on Monday to finish off. Meanwhile, I was assured we were waterproofed against the storm due over the week end, the felt having been laid and secured by the battens.

Saturday October 21<sup>st</sup>: After I managed to chip one of my teeth on some new cereal we were trying for breakfast, we spent all day at the Old School dealing with the electrical jumble. Christine, who manages the Old School for the church, was anxious that we clear the cellar of all the electrical equipment stored there, particularly since she had recently had a visit from a church official who surveyed the interior of the Old School, said little and took lots of pictures. It all sounded quite ominous. The problem was that there was not enough room for all the stock in our crowded space we had been allocated on this occasion to display the items for sale and, what was more significant, not enough time in three days to process it all. The untested items remained in the corridor until I could deal with them and what I did not have time to test would simply have to go in the car to the tip.

I came home to deal with my recording of Jazz Record Requests just after 5 p.m. and, for the first time for months, we put on the central heating for the evening, being too tired to light a fire.

Jenny prepared tea as usual.

Sunday October 22<sup>nd</sup>: We dozed in bed for an hour and a half after treating the cat at 7 a.m., making it a later start at the Old School, after 10 a.m.

Monday October 23<sup>rd</sup>: We were up early as usual to treat the cat.

After breakfast, I telephoned the Dentist to make an appointment for the following day to have my broken tooth repaired. I telephoned the surgery to make an appointment for my annual medical review after postponing it due to the 'flu. I telephoned the vet to make an appointment for the cat to have her medication reviewed.

Despite the early start, we did not hit the road until 10 a.m. and we went to the tip to dump a load of rubbish from the Old School before starting our day. I was not happy because there was still a lot to do and we only had until 4 p.m. before the sale started.

By some miracle, we were actually ready for the sale in good time and, what's more we did quite well. Not only that but Christine relented and allowed us to keep some more collectable items back in plastic boxes for the Antiques and Collector's Fair next Easter. I made sure everything of mine was put away neatly and labelled appropriately.

We were both shattered.

Tuesday October 24<sup>th</sup>: The roofers came early and finished off.

I whizzed off to the dentist and I saw the chap upstairs rather than our usual dentist. He fixed my tooth in half an hour and without anaesthetic.

I spent some time trying to order some baking items for Jenny but our Internet supplier (Healthy Supplies) was out of stock of some items and I sent an E-mail (their preferred method of communication) asking when they would be back in supply. The web site said I would receive a prompt response. I didn't.

After lunch, we went to the launch of the Tuesday D-CaFF, a quieter dementia café session.

I spent what was left of the afternoon sorting out a CD that would not play on the D-CaFF's machine.

Wednesday October 25<sup>th</sup>: It was time to reconcile the accounts and to tackle Anglian Home Improvements. I had given up trying to talk to them because they did not respond to me. Instead, I contacted my bank and asked them to recover my money since I paid by credit card. I wouldn't be doing business with Anglian again. I also contacted the local Trading Standards office asking for their help and advice, since the Glass and Glazing federation, of which Anglian was a member, had not responded to my message either.

I spent the rest of the day, until 4:15 p.m., cutting up the old roof lats for the fire. Then it was time for a quick shower and change before Diane arrived for me to set up E-mail using IMAP for D-CaFF on her Windows 10 laptop using the mail software that came with the operating system. That proved more of a challenge than I expected and I gave up, giving her Web mail access instead.

Ten minutes after she had gone, I succeeded in configuring the Windows 10 mail on the laptop I use for testing equipment at the Old School to access the D-CaFF mailbox using IMAP. It seemed I had been trying to make it more complicated than it was, worrying about making sure the TCP ports were correct and such, when all this was handled automatically by Windows 10. I concluded Windows 10 was too smart for its own good. I never did like it and I still didn't.

Thursday October 26<sup>th</sup>: We just had time for breakfast and pot washing before we had to take the cat to the vet. We had booked her in for a review of her thyroid medication, which meant checking her weight, heart-rate and, more importantly, blood for thyroid and kidney function. Toffee had gained quite a bit of weight, which was a good sign and she looked much better. She also had more strength in her muscles. Her heart-rate was still fast but we put that down to anxiety, being out of her home. Drawing blood was like obtaining money from a Yorkshire-man (and I should know). It took several attempts, making me anxious, let alone the cat and she came away with several puncture wounds and minus a whole lot of fur from her upper chest, poor cat.

While we were there, we picked up another month's supply of her thyroid medication and ordered and paid for another batch of renal tablets. We left minus an arm and a leg, having paid for the blood test as well.

Once home and out of her cage, Toffee wandered round the house as though it was a new home, inspecting all the rooms and sniffing around. She was obviously disorientated, although she did seem to recover quickly.

We decided to go to Summerseat Garden centre for lunch, by way of the tip in Bury, where we dumped more of the rubbish from the Old School jumble in the appropriate recycling skips and cages.

While I was waiting for Jenny, I submitted my complaint about Anglian to the Citizens Advice Consumer Service, as recommended by Trading Standards.

As we arrived at the Garden Centre, I had a call on my mobile 'phone. It was a lady from Anglian Home Improvements wanting to arrange for a couple of chaps to fit my new finial on the conservatory on the following day. Although it was our usual grocery shopping day, it was too good an opportunity to miss so we agreed they would arrive as early as possible in the morning.

What prompted this sudden course of action, I have no idea. Was it my demand for a refund and if I did not receive the money, saying that I would take steps to recover the money I had paid together with any costs incurred? Was it my complaint to the Glass and Glazing Federation? It couldn't have been the conversation I had with my bank because I had not yet received the official form on which to make my formal complaint. Surely it couldn't be Trading Standards because they had referred me to the Citizens Advice Consumer Service and I had only contacted them a short time earlier. Whatever it was, it was welcome progress, assuming, of course, that the chaps arrived as arranged.

I spent much of the rest of the day on the computer, some of it helping Jenny to price items for the car boot sale, having collected more car booty from our good neighbour, Doreen, on the way home.

Friday October 27<sup>th</sup>: Well the chaps arrived from Anglian early enough. The finial they brought was smaller than the original but that didn't matter too much. What did matter was that they didn't bring the base plate or "spoon" as they call it. The base onto which the finial screws was also broken (Anglian knew this from the photo I sent) and the base is part of the long "spoon" that fits all along the top of the conservatory. Anglian did not send this along with the finial. So it's one step forward and two steps back.

Our grocery shop went as well as ever, with a trip to Asda at Pilsworth before heading south to Unicorn and Waitrose. There was a long, slow crawl on the M60, to the point where the M60 and M62 diverged due to (a) an accident on the opposite carriageway and drivers slowing down to have a good look (it's amazing how blood and guts fascinate people – so long as it's not theirs) and (b) a broken-down, articulated lorry in one of the lanes.

The journey back was just as bad until we passed the junction with the M62.

There was also a bit of a delay at the junction in Stretford where the road on the return trip from Unicorn was back to a single lane again for no obvious reason. The junction improvements seemed to be taking an awfully long time.

Safely home, I turned my attention to the TV programmes for the week, setting up the recordings on the computer, as usual.

Saturday October 28<sup>th</sup>: Jenny and Rachel spent much of the day sorting the car boot stock and packing the car for the following day, which was forecast to be sunny but cold with a bit of a breeze. Given the dark, wet day today, I had my doubts.

I spent a long time cleaning the stove, the hearth, the mantle-piece and the ornaments that adorn the shelf just below the mirror, not to mention the mirror itself. This was a painstaking job because it had not been so thoroughly cleaned for some time and it was very dirty from its heavy, recent use. For yesterday and today, though, we were back on the central heating.

My task was interrupted by Jenny requiring some assistance to obtain her Christmas stock from the garage loft and, after struggling with that, I decided to replace the bulb that had gone in the garage, which was easier said than done, being a recessed halogen bulb.

My few, spare moments were currently being used to refine the design of my web site and it was a case of recoding the HTML pages. That was going quite well. The main difficulty would be when I came to the picture gallery pages and the pages for individual pictures, the latter currently being generated by Java code. I was thinking I would have to write some more Java code to convert the old pages to the new ones, which would be much quicker than ploughing through the hundreds of pages manually.

Sunday October 29<sup>th</sup>: It was a car boot day, sunny for the most part but cold, temperatures in the northerly breeze not making it into double figures. Trading was slow and, at times, non-existent, making a profit of less than half what we would normally expect, not selling any of the more expensive items. Talking to the other traders, I think we did better than most.

I did manage an update to the village web site in the evening, even though I was quite tired.

Monday October 30<sup>th</sup>: In dealing with my E-mails, I had received one from British Gas, increasing my boiler maintenance contract, due to renew on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, by some £54 for the year. I was not happy about that, having received an offer from Corgi for a fixed-price contract for two years at over three pounds a month less than I was currently

paying and providing a lot more cover (electrics, drains, etc. as well as the boiler and radiators). I telephoned British Gas and used their excellent call-back facility since there was a 23 minute wait in the queue to speak with someone. A lady telephoned and I explained I was not happy about the increase, that I had received a better offer from Corgi and that I would be happy to renew with British Gas if the contract remained the same as the current one, at the same price as this year (i.e. no increase). This was on the basis that Corgi was an unknown quantity and I was quite happy with the quality of service from British Gas. I commented on the latter to the young lady.

It took about ten minutes to discount my renewal to the same cost as the current year and I was advised that the new documents would be sent to me by E-mail in due course.

I was all geared up to gloss the door jambs but that never matured. I got as far as cleaning out the brush I had left soaking in white spirit after I undercoated the woodwork. It was a really nice day and I could have done some gardening. Instead I spent the day giving Jenny the odd hand with her car booty and working through some equipment that needed pricing and testing.

I lit a fire later than planned. As a result, I did not give the stove enough time to pre-heat using candles and lighting the kindling with eco-firelighters resulted in some blowback of smoke for the first time since we had the fire serviced and due to the flu being too cold to draw air from the living room upwards, through the chimney. It was not as bad as in the past and was easily remedied by opening a window and quickly warming the stove such that warm air rose up the chimney, causing it to draw the smoke up the flue.

Tuesday October 31<sup>st</sup>: I was up about 7:15, tending the cat single-handed as Jenny had woken with a very painful neck on her left side, caused, she suspected, by lifting her heavy car booty boxes. I washed the pots from the previous evening and breakfasted alone, taking Jenny a cup of tea in bed.

Jenny rose a little later and spent the morning in her chair, reading and trying to ignore her painful, swollen neck while I compiled the documentation to make my claim for a refund on my Mastercard for the Anglian fiasco.

Lorna dropped by for a chat and to enquire how our decorating was going. I told her it wasn't. We were waiting for Richard to sort out the wooden flooring for the dining room and the delivery of the radiators.

Jenny did manage to prepare lunch and we had that at about 1:30, just after my thesis on financial recovery was completed.

After lunch had settled, I walked up to Holcombe Brook post office to post the letter to my bank. I called at Frank and Gwen's house on the way up to Holcombe Brook to deliver a message for Jenny but there was no reply to the door bell. I continued up the road, the long way round to Holcombe Brook and came down Longsight Road to the Post Office. I would have saved myself the journey and used the A4 folded envelope the bank had sent for my reply with postage pre-paid if all the documentation had fitted into it, putting it in the local post box. As it was, I had to use a full A4 envelope and have it weighed, costing £1.30 for first class delivery.

I came back down Longsight Road and up Vernon Road to Greenmount, having walked the couple of miles and called at the post office in about 40 minutes. Needless to say, I was perspiring somewhat from the exercise.