

DIARY 2022/23

January 31<sup>st</sup> – Tuesday

It has begun and I doubt that you will hear very much else other than Farm news between now and when the shop opens towards Easter. Of course, we used to open in the middle of March, regardless of the Easter holiday but over the last three years, things have changed quite a bit. We were prevented by circumstance opening too early across the last two years and that for us set a bit of a precedent; we rather enjoyed it.

This year, the price of lighting and keeping the frigeration going means we have to be careful opening in a quiet period. I was pressed by a neighbour who needed some advance notice of our new hours for some holiday lets, so I spent a short while devising the hours and printing our signage. The updated hours are now on the website, too, sandwiched between The Diary and the online shop, in case you were interested, dear reader.

I must put my hands up and report that I did not hurry to get all the morning chores out of the way and jump into my DIYman suit this morning. There was nothing else particularly pressing, I just could not be fagged to make an effort, that was all. I am sure I must have done a few useful things while I was procrastinating, but I really cannot remember at all what they were.

Eventually, I could not put off the inevitable any longer and I gathered myself together to make ready to go. I had to visit the builders' merchant first because I wanted some more screws with which to finish the second raised bed. While I was there, I also acquired a bar for the gate latch at The Farm entrance. For a long time now, the gate has been secured by an old bridle that had been left lying around up there. This had become wholly inadequate and had led to some alarm when it parted in a storm and let the gate swing open. It was not as if any animals escaped – or got in, but it was indicative, we thought, that someone had been in the field, although the camera had not picked anything up as it had been left facing the wrong way. After I had discovered the facts, I decided to try and fix the latch that is already on the gate post.

From the builders' merchant I went and collected Mother. Mother is an essential accessory at The Farm as she looks after the bleddy hound while we are engaged working, when she is not potting seedlings, then she does both. She also loves being up there, sitting in the cabin and watching nature happen all about and the bleddy hound will sit with her for long periods. The last time we went without Mother, the bleddy hound, insisting she stay with us, got a chill that worried us and rather prevented us going up there together until the temperature improved and we could bring Mother along.

Today's schedule was me continuing my task of making raised beds while the Missus continued to clear out the polytunnel of old plants and broken pots. Both were largely successful enterprises except I was prevented from the final elements of construction because the bleddy hound had decided to lie exactly where the raised bed would be going. She has an uncanny knack of siting herself precisely where the next bit of work is going to happen, and I had to stop sawing a couple of times to secure bits of wood that otherwise would have fallen on her head.

Since I could not finish the raised bed, I had a look at the gate. The bar that will sit in the latch would only go in one position on the steel gate, which was, of course, in the wrong place for the latch that was already in situ on the gate post. That would need to be dropped down an inch or two and cut in. I do not think that is too much of a task, but the gatepost is old and not in the best shape, so we will see.

Time was pressing and Mother had clearly had her fill of nature by the end of the afternoon. It was a good place to stop, and I had to be down in The Cove to receive our second delivery of bodyboards from Doing Parcels Dreadfully.

It was another nine boxes, so I was a tad disappointed that they had scheduled in delivery between five and six o'clock. I could have laid bets that it would not have been the full nine boxes at that stage in the evening and I would have won big – three boxes this time. I asked the driver why the whole consignment was not in the truck that was large enough to accommodate it. He told me that the palate that held them was right next to his truck but was told only to bring three. I find it odd how it is never the driver's fault and yet a subsequent driver will always blame the previous one for the error. Smoke and mirrors, I suspect. Anyway, at least I will be able to fit all six boxes in the truck when they do arrive tomorrow but I will need to make a separate trip for the first three.

The Missus declared tomorrow a day off but I will need to go to The Farm twice for the delivery and I was thinking that I may as well finish the gate when I do. The weather forecast says it will be a bit breezy, so it will be a wait and see job. How exciting.

January 30<sup>th</sup> – Monday

Today was a red-letter day, well, probably more tea rose or light coral letter day as it was momentous but there have been more momentous days than this.

It started in a very ordinary sort of way, with the bleddy hound insisting that I get out of bed early doors, so she obviously knew what sort of day was in the offing. Alright, it was a normal sort of time for her, but it went with the ambience I am trying to conjure for you, dear reader.

The temperature had very clearly risen a few degrees and we were no longer subject to a cutting chill in the air. The message regarding the increase in temperature had

not yet filtered down to the hut with the tin roof that serves as the gymnasium; it was still bleddy freezing in there. Perhaps that is not exactly true because although I started my rowing session with an extra layer, by the time I finished I rather wished that I had not. It is a tricky one because there was no way I was going to start the session without it and neither could I really stop halfway. It would ruin my time and interrupt my flow. Still, it ended up as a rather blistering session, which served its purpose in the end.

By the time I returned home, the Missus was up and ready for action at The Farm. We had discussed this last night, acknowledging that if we did not start up there very soon, we would very quickly run out of time. Since I had to wash the dust from the gymnasium off me and have some breakfast, I would drop her up there giving her a head start on the day. I had a lady arriving with some greetings cards that would coincide with the time I probably would leave, then I would head over to collect Mother and go up to The Farm.

All of that happened except the lady with the greetings cards did not show up. I had other things on my mind at the time, not least the trauma of paying my income tax, and completely forgot that she was coming. Later in the afternoon she called me to apologise but her daughter-in-law was about to have a baby and she had been called to the hospital. I did not enquire why, perhaps she is a midwife. It was a happy result anyway, not the baby, that failed to materialise, but the both of us not making the meeting for different reasons. We arranged to meet in the middle of the afternoon and I made a special trip down from The Farm to take the greetings cards from her.

By the time I was called away from The Farm I had already achieved what I set out to today. It has been a long time coming, but I succeeded in putting together the first of the raised bed structures. I could easily have made one and very possibly two in a day as it turned out to be remarkably easy. The hardest part was the final putting together of the two sides and the two ends.

I established pretty quickly that the two short ends were alone built in the manner of a convenience contrived from bricks. I reasoned that it was likely that if I added the two long sides on the flat of the decking outside the cabin where I was working, it would possibly remain there forever as it would be too heavy to move. The only option was to put it together at the site where it would remain, inside the polytunnel, and hope that we could get the ground flat enough.

The final construction is achieved by standing the short ends on their side an appropriate distance apart and laying the long planks across them. Making sure they were level and at 90 degrees to the ends, I then screwed them into place. It all worked rather wonderfully but it was certainly a beast to topple over so that I could attach the other side. It was then even more of a beast to put the right way up and push and shove it into its exact location, after all, when it is filled with earth it will not move again in my lifetime.

It may not be apparent from the written word, dear reader, but I am immensely pleased with the result. Not only did it come together with relative ease without the usual traumas of grumpy shopkeeper construction, but the object is everything that I hoped it would be, robust, mainly, but aesthetically pleasing at the same time but most of all, yes, most of all, dear reader, the Missus is much delighted with it.

I would say that I can now hang up my circular saw and retire, but I have another five of these bleddy things to churn out before the shop reopens. It is not as if that is the hard part. Each one will require around 2.5 tons of topsoil, which we have in abundance at the end of the field. We can ship that up to the polytunnel easily enough by the ton but the last bit, into the raised bed, is by wheelbarrow. That is a lot of trips and because of the height, we cannot run the barrow up planks. Each one will have to be shovelled out. I think I will save a fortune in gymnasium subscriptions, which will help pay for the bone cruncher fees.

January 29<sup>th</sup> – Sunday

Just the half day at the range today as the afternoon session was for a format that I choose not to do. It did not stop the bleddy hound getting me out of bed at ten past six o'clock but at least I knew it was ten past six o'clock because I see the time on my mobile telephone without having to push buttons. The experiment with the app worked just fine and it is a crying shame that I did not think of it before I went through the trauma of trying out three clocks, one of which was not suitable and the other two did not work.

Quite coincidentally, the support people for the middle clock, the one that worked fine until it did not, actually responded to my report this morning, two weeks after I contacted them. They asked that I send them a video of the clock not working. That was a bit of a challenge since I would have to somehow demonstrate that it was faulty not working rather than just sitting there not working. I ended up with a five minute video of me plugging it in, pressing appropriate buttons and then plugging in another device to the charging port to demonstrate that it had power to it.

The next problem I had was that a five minute video is quite large and resided on my mobile telephone and in 'the cloud' where it refused to be downloaded. Ideally, I wanted it on my PC so that I could attach it to the message I was sending back. It took a bit of pushing and shoving but I eventually got it there and then had to look at some software that would reduce the size of the file quite a bit. It took far longer than I anticipated but I managed to send them a smaller file, which was still quite large, so I also sent a link to the video on the Youtube channel – which in itself was a bit of a challenge.

For once, my load to carry to the range was relatively light. The temperature seemed to have improved a little too and although we started out quite dry, we were enveloped in mizzle toward the end of the session. Nevertheless, it was a pleasant

enough interlude and since I was only doing half the day, I collected Mother on the way back.

The loft and the extraction system is becoming something of an itch that I have to scratch, or maybe more like an albatross around my neck. At the end of yesterday I had more or less given up on doing anything further in the loft, leaving it to our electrician to finish off. Clearly, it had been nagging at me and after dropping Mother off I went up to The Farm to collect my jigsaw. That is now all of the tools retrieved from The Farm except for the circular saw, which I sincerely hope that I do not need for this project.

I had marked out where the cut was to be made yesterday while I was in the loft, so apart from checking again that there was nothing underneath it, I set to with some cutting. I left the last inch undone because it was approaching a bundle of electric cables and I did not want to accidentally run on after the last bit cut away. Pushing away the insulation that lies there I could see a space big enough to put the vent, unfortunately, it was going the wrong way. In the other direction, there was a noggin, or blocking, in the way running between two joists. I think that I would be reasonably comfortable cutting this away as it does not run to the full height of the joist like blocking might, but I shall seek advice first.

I could not advance much but I was keen to get a solid reference point of where I was in the kitchen. A small pin hole would be sufficient and I had brought a drill with me, really to drop the cable down. The problem I had was that with a normal drill bit attached, I could not reach the ceiling panel. I had foreseen this and had brought a longer drill bit which was only just long enough to reach the ceiling but not go all the way through. I tried it anyway and found that I could just about go deep enough to see it from the kitchen. As the Missus kindly point out it could just as easily have been the bedroom with my luck so far.

Gathering up my tools and abandoning the scene yet again, I went in search of my small hole. I had thought that it might be further back than I hoped but it was worse than that. It was at the very outside edge of a possible vent hole when I had hoped it would be the inside edge. That noggin or block will have to come out as there really is no viable plan B. It also means cutting the vent hole directly below the bundle of electric cables running through the loft. I will definitely leave that to the electrician who I will call tomorrow to arrange a date.

It was the middle of the afternoon by the time I sat down with nothing to do. The Missus had extracted a beast of a rib joint of beef from the freezer yesterday. It would have looked more at home in the Flintstones. Today, the smell of roasting beef tortured our olfactory receptors for the next three hours before it was teatime. Since I had missed breakfast or a snack since, I could have eaten a scabby dunkey by the time it arrived. The joint was about the same size as said dunkey and hopefully, I shall have some for breakfast too.

January 28<sup>th</sup> – Saturday

It took a good deal of effort and will power to get going this morning. So much so that when the bleddy hound made her move at ten minutes to six, I abandoned her to her fate. A half hour later, she was lying disgusted on her window throne in the living room in the darkness.

I did not exactly go back to sleep for that half an hour, either. To see what the time was I had to wake up my mobile telephone from its slumber and press buttons to get it to show me the time. It was sufficient mental and physical activity to put me into fully awake mode from which there was no proper going back. It brought into sharp focus my lack of bedside clock and my failure to find an adequate replacement for the two I had now discounted as being cheap and useless.

Waiting until after I had taken the bleddy hound out and had settled for tea and a spot of breakfast, I resumed my search for timepieces. It was an area that I had discounted previously as I did not want a 'smart clock' as most of its features would be wasted. The unfortunate alternatives appeared to be better quality clocks that did not do what I wanted or back to the plethora of cheap ones that would only last five minutes if at all.

I had just about settled on a 'smart clock' that was about half the price of the top models and although it did not boast all the features, it did most of what I wanted. Sadly, all the suppliers had run out of stock and while I considered what next it came to me that these devices are no more than mobile telephones without the ability to make telephone calls. Surely, I thought in my lightbulb moment, there is probably an 'app' that I can install to get my existing mobile telephone to do the jobs – essentially show the time not too brightly, have an alarm feature and charge my mobile telephone at the same time. There was, after two seconds of searching the second one I tried was ideal. All I had to do was to prop up the telephone so that I could just glance at it from the comfort of my bedtime repose. There will be a stress test of the idea tonight.

Happily, searching for clocks did not impact too much on the order of the day, which was to fetch my multitool from The Farm. The thing that did impact on the order of the day was my lack of will to get my body to move in the correct direction. Herculean effort was employed in this resolve and more required to sustain it. I did procrastinate a little while at The Farm, but it was in a good cause. I wanted to check the state of the cabin batteries after a fair day yesterday and unfortunately, they are still wanting. They simply are no longer holding their charge and will need to be replaced. The suddenness of their failing rather caught me off guard as I assumed it would be a gradual degradation. I also moved the expensive barbeque into the barn, a task too long outstanding, during which journey one of the wheels fell off, which I believe was representative of the day at large.

Eventually, I brought myself back home and the main task of the day, to cut lumps off the last floor panel in the loft with a view to moving it sufficiently to slide the other behind it out of the way.

I noticed yesterday how surprisingly long the building is when you have to crawl most of its length and some of that on your belly. I noticed it even more today, which brought to mind the question of exactly why I was doing this and not paying someone younger and more supple – and with useful knees – to do it for me. I concluded that it was probably what tight, grumpy shopkeepers are best known for – being tight and, at that moment, certainly very grumpy.

Labouring at both ends under flood light, I cut considerable lumps off the panel. It is chipboard, so the lumps came away very easily. After each slicing, I did some test lifting, then some more cutting and some more lifting. I discovered that while I could get one end to a relatively good position, when I moved to the other end, the first end would slide back into place. Being chipboard, anything I used to push into the gap to keep it open simply sunk into the fibre. I even tried to jack it up using clamps to no avail. Most of the problem was timbers inserted as rafters for the shallow pitch of the side roof overhung the panel. I suspect that the panel was in place before these were built unless they were fitted from the other end – I did not wish to contemplate that.

I suppose that I had spent more than an hour trying to lift the panel, it being key to installing the final bits of the extraction system. Possibly with two people, we may have worked it out but alone, I had no choice but to give up. My mind went back to paying someone to do the job, someone who perhaps had better tools or a better idea. Before I left the loft, I decided to pencil in where the fan was to be sited, so that any work person coming behind would know where to look. While there I had a good look to make sure that there were no joists in the way and in doing so noticed that the hole I had drawn sat on two sections of panel with no supporting structure underneath. It would be possible to cut the hole with impunity – and probably a jigsaw – without the risk cutting through wires or support structure. The only worry was how we might make a hole for the wire to go down which would need to be in a somewhat less convenient location. I decided that I would rest on the one good bit of news and let our electrician work out the wire problem.

When I returned to the real world where loft panels that needed lifting were in a world of their own high above me, I decided that was it for the day, I would do no more. That was not exactly true as there was half a box of completed .44 cartridges that needed finishing off and was annoying me. I went downstairs and took half an hour to finish those off. I wish I had not because I ran out of primers, the bit in the end that makes it go bang, with just two to go. I mean, I have a few more. They come in boxes of 100. It is the 100 that ran out just short of doing 100 and I am sure that I did not drop any, which meant I had to dip into another box of 100, which means I will be short for the next 100 rounds I do. That is just irritating.

I took my irritation upstairs and sulked in front of the television for the rest of the afternoon and evening.

It was quite pleasant to remain in the warm as it seemed a very cold day outside. This was odd, because the weather report told us that it was not as cold as it has been in the recent past. The wind was in the north that would have made it seem colder but there was hardly a breeze. I maybe thought that it was me having laboured in a cold loft where, perversely, I had to take a layer off because I got too warm but the Missus said that it was too and the previous night had been.

With high pressure in charge there was hardly a ripple on the bay. I had a call from the Highly Professional Craftsperson in the middle of the afternoon to tell me of a whale in the bay. I just caught a glimpse of it as it passed Cowloe. There have been several sightings of a humpback in Mounts Bay and St Ives Bay recently, so it must have been our turn for a visit.

Pleasant day with nature to geek at or no, I was not in the least temped out. This was definitely a day – or afternoon – at rest and I will go at it again with vigour, or something close to it, again tomorrow.

January 27<sup>th</sup> – Friday

I did a Mrs Rochester impression today and spent most of it locked away in the loft, so I did not see much of what the day looked like. I was not mad to start with, however, but as the hours progressed, I could feel a certain instability creeping in.

I fancy that it was a little less cold today, although when I got to the gymnasium I doubted whether that was true. I should have taken more notice of my ability to move in relative comfort because the rest of the day was spent doubled over or squeezed into tight spaces. With the freedom I had, I managed a blistering session and was even relatively warm at the end of it.

There was no particular wasting time after I came back. I did have to take some action to send back the clock that has only arrived yesterday as it did not work out of the box. It did not flash the numbers as it said it would when I pressed the “set” button, which was a bit of a give-away that something was amiss, but it allowed me to change the hours to the correct time, which looked alright at the time. I set it up in the bedroom but when I returned later, the time had not advanced. It might be quite useful in reality not to have time advance but it is not a great feature in a clock, so I sought a refund.

I am not having a great deal of luck with bedside clocks and the last two were the only ones I could find that permit the user to set the brightness down to zero. Some promise several levels of brightness, but I doubt that they go dim enough not to disturb my sleep. I may be forced to try one on the premise that it goes back if it does not meet muster.



That particular bit of administration over and done with, I prepared to go up in the loft. I had decided that I would try and get everything done today, which would include running the ducting from one end to the other, installing the fan in its designated space and place the junction box. Slightly in more doubt was lifting the floor to drop the switch cable down to the kitchen, which I reasoned that I might be able to achieve and wire everything to the point just the mains wires would need connecting.

Since I did not want to be getting in and out of the loft every few minutes, I tried to run through in my head what I would be doing, and the tools required for it. As I went through each step of the process, I set aside the tools I would need. Screws I placed in a small plastic bag and stuck in the pocket of my DIYman overalls. At the end, there was enough there to warrant a couple of trips up to the loft as it was and then I had to find places to put them, handy to use but not in the way.

The Missus had gone up ahead of me yesterday to clear a run through. I think something went awry with the communication because there were large containers all along the side that everything was going to go on. In truth, she could not have done much else but in retrospect it would have been handy to remove four or six of the containers altogether and stored them temporarily in the spare bedroom. The upshot was that space was incredibly tight and I kept having to rearrange the boxes to get where I wanted to be.

Aging, creaky and worn out bits are not the ideal physical attributes for working in tight and enclosed spaces and occasionally, it was exceedingly uncomfortable. The first challenge was the placing on the fan, which I had intended to screw to a purlin. When I tried it for size it left the clearances for attaching the ducting quite tight but also I would not be able to reach the little screws that would hold the motor in when I replaced it after screwing in the mounting. As luck would have it, there was a gash bit of chipboard lying there, just the right size to attach across two rafters. It took some effort, but the fan is now hanging under the slates, and I just hope that they cope with any vibration.

Placing the junction box and preparing the wire from the fan was a simple and quick task after that, so I advanced down the loft with the rolled up ducting with a view to lifting the flooring. I had anticipated that the boards, that are fixed in small sizes and run across the loft from side to side, to be screwed to the joists. They were not. Instead, some smart eye, thought it a cracking good idea to tongue and groove them from one end of the loft to another. To lift one in the middle, say, the very end one needs to be lifted and the others slid out of its adjoining board until you get to the one you want.

There was some luck in that the one I wanted to lift was fourth one in from the end; I would only have to lift the end one and shuffle two along. I reached over the end one and gave it a tug only to find that it was so snug against the A frame that it was not

coming up without some considerable effort and a big hammer, which is probably how it went down. Looking at it, if I could saw away the bit that was catching, it would probably lift without too much issue. The problem I had was that the saw and the multitool that I would probably use were up at The Farm.

I put that stage in the too difficult pile and proceeded to the next one. The running of the cable down to the kitchen and finishing the wiring preparation would have to wait.

Undeterred, I set about running the ducting, guestimating where it would start at the vent, and worked back from there. It attaches to the fan first, which is half way down the run and then the draft valve. The tricky bit now was installing the reducer and the Y fitting so that I could connect the bigger kitchen duct to the smaller one for the bathroom. This was just plain awkward as it was near the hatch and restricted my movement even more than working in the rest of the loft. Ideally, I would have made the join nearer the exit but getting at it was just too much.

Initially, I thought that the bathroom system had two draft valves, but when I disconnect one of the unions I discovered that one of them was the fan. I had installed it but had quite forgotten what it looked like. The difference between it and the one for the kitchen is stark and I was beginning to wonder if I might have over specified it. It will refresh the air in the kitchen in two minutes and I suspect that we may have to hold onto something solid when we switch it on to save being sucked out through the vent.

Short of running up to The Farm for the multitool, I could go no further with the extraction system. The last job in the loft was finishing laying the cable for the new ring main in the living room. I had left the end that connects to the consumer unit rolled up at the last A frame not expecting it to be installed until the whole loft was torn apart by the reroofing work. With that now not going ahead until at least the end of the year I had asked our electrician to install it along with the extraction system install. It seemed best to run the cable as far as I could without it dangling too near the box.

It was quite a relief to get into some space and to be able to move around eventually. While I could have made a dash for The Farm that would have saved time tomorrow I thought, begger it, and sat on my behind for the rest of the day. I will start afresh tomorrow fortified by some locally landed haddock. It was a just reward, I felt.

January 26<sup>th</sup> – Thursday

As stunning winter days go, today would have been up there with the best of them. There was blue sky and brightness the day long and even first thing it was clear enough to witness a host of stars, starting with the brightest to the north being Capella. I had plenty of time for star gazing as there was little else I would be doing at the very early hour the bleddy hound had me up at.

I had a few plans this morning, largely to use up the time that I had because the bits for the extraction system had not arrived. I was beginning to rue not spending the £10 for a next day delivery but there again I would have grumbled a bit at that, too. In truth, I should have planned to order the kit a bit sooner, so it is down to poor planning, really.

Given that the truck had been cleaned underneath, I reasoned that it was probably the right thing to do to clean it on top. I have not been bothered to since the garage at St Buryan closed where I rarely had to wait for someone else to finish first. Going into town would be much busier, so I could not be fussed with it. The chief reason for washing it, though, was to get rid of that sticky dust from the bottom cleaning process. I felt waiting at a pressure wash was probably worth it in this instance.

I had to go into town anyway to get the right cable for the extraction system and we needed fuel in the truck. As luck had it, a young lady was just finishing washing her car when I was ready to start. It was the same type of machine as the one at St Buryan whereby plugging pound coins in it extended the amount of use, which was ideal, as opposed to one where you have to select a programme and run around your vehicle like a nutter before the time expires. I still missed a couple of bits, but you really cannot see them until the area dries, by which time it is too late.

With everything done I slipped back to St Buryan to pick up Mother. There is a road closed sign at the turn off to the village from the A30. Unfortunately, it is in such a position that you cannot read it until you are going past the junction when you discover it is not happening for a fortnight. I had to go on until I met the next turn off at Crows an Wra, which did not matter too much as it was a pleasant change.

The Missus was waiting when we got back to The Cove to take Mother to the airport. Not that she is going anywhere, so please do not fret that we have mailed her to the Scillies, but they do like to sit in the café there and watch the air traffic. It was the first convenient day to go when the aeroplanes were flying as well for some while.

While they were gone, I sprang into action. It was not entirely intentional but I thought that after yesterday, I had better achieve something today. There is a double socket in the living room the front of which has hung slightly off for as long as either of us can remember. It is a little out of the way but not so much that we do not see it or wish to use it from time to time and indeed more frequently than quite a few of the others about the place. While I was purchasing various electrical bits for the loft, I also picked up a double socket face. Today, concerned that it was actually the wall box element of the unit that was at fault, I bought one of those as well. I was glad that I did because it was the wall box that was broken.

I fetched my toolbox from downstairs and made a mental note that perhaps I should have another as well. The box is overflowing with tools and is exceedingly heavy. Given that there are at least a dozen tools in there that are useful but less used, it would be handy to have a 'useful-but-less-used' toolbox to put them in. I can then

curse every time I do a job somewhere only to discover that the tool I needed for that particular job is in the other toolbox.

Anyway, the job went relatively smoothly other than having to return to the shop to pick up screw fixings for plasterboard when the existing screws would not go back into the holes they came out of.

Since we now had a working double socket – alright we had a working double socket before, but now we have a working double socket we are not afraid to use – I decided to fix the standard lamp that now resides next to it. This is one of a pair of standard lamps that are wrought from metal tubes that spiral near the top and cup a glass bowl for the lamp. They used powerful halogen bulbs once upon a time until I decided it would be oh so simple to convert them to LEDs. I had cannibalised the interiors of mains flood lights in the attempt that was partially successful until they started smoking and fizzling when the heat got a little too much for the components that were clearly far too close to each other.

They have remained dormant looking for a better solution. The Missus' better solution was to unceremoniously dump them as the chrome has rusted dreadfully. I will admit that they are no longer the gleaming art deco examples that once they were, but I love the shape of them and am loathed to throw them away. One day I will take them somewhere and have them re-chromed.

So far, they have had a stay of execution and in order to prove that they are useful as well as decorative, I have continually looked for a better solution. Late last year I discovered a flood light that was slim enough to sit in the cup of the lamp, and it had sat in the shop awaiting the acid test of being installed in the lamp. Today, I went and retrieved the floodlight from downstairs and with a bit of modification, this time only to cable lengths, I completed the conversion. There is no Heath Robinsonism this time and the flood light sits unobtrusively and more importantly, in original condition and even more importantly, works.

The fact that I actually achieved something – two somethings - today, pleased me greatly. On top of this the parts for the loft arrived, although I realised that I have short ordered a jubilee fastener, and possibly a fused junction box. Nevertheless, it was too late to start on it today, but it will get done tomorrow, as far as my part of the work goes.

Today being a Thursday and the sea state being relatively conducive to Lifeboat launches, we launched the Lifeboat. It was a bit of an earlier start on this occasion to fall in with the tide, which would reach high water around the time of recovery. As opposed to last week when there were not enough Boat Crew to launch both boats, this week there were more than enough but the sea state did not permit it. Our numbers on the shore were pretty comfortable, too, so we split in two and half went off the Harbour car park to practise on the Tooktrak. The remainder saw to the safe launch of the boat and setting up for a short slip recovery later in the evening.

For those of us not playing with the Tooltrak, there was some hanging about to be done. Last week, we put a hole in the short high pressure hose rendering it useless. They cannot be repaired and it seems a tortuous process trying to order a replacement. We have a long section of hose that we use occasionally to take weed off the bottom of the long slip, so we fitted that to the static machine and set out sufficient length for washing down the boat when it returned.

We saw the lights of the Lifeboat appearing in the gaps at the appointed time and set to being ready to receive it. I was in the optimum position to watch what was clearly a textbook recovery up the short slip and with sufficient numbers of us, our labours were pretty fairly distributed – everyone else took on the heavy lifting while I carried the burden of watching responsibly. We are, after all, a very equitable, very excellent Shore Crew.

January 25<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday

The world around me is changing at a frightening pace and I find I have to devote more and more time just to catch up and stand still, let alone get ahead of the curve. Once upon a time I could walk into a coffee shop and ask for a coffee. Doing that today will bring a look of distain that brings looks of distain to a whole new level of distain.

This, to you dear reader of the world, is, I am certain very old news, and you are all no doubt, master exponents of the order for a quad venti white mocha frappuccino with sprinkles. Even from here the world has moved on apace, and with the growth and popularity of television cookery shows, the scope to find and use ingredients even a previous generation of top chefs would never have heard of has expanded exponentially.

One of our suppliers is at the heart of the food revolution, for down here, at least and we get the occasional insight broadcast across the ether by their newsletters. Today, I discovered that my salads are so old hat I am surprised they do not arrive in front of me motheaten. I like a good radish in my salad and up until now, a radish was a radish but I find that, once again I am behind the times. Apparently, there are black radishes from Spain about the size of a white turnip, which, alright, there are bound to be derivatives in hotter countries, after all we have the horseradish. But wait, there is more, further down the list is a blue meat radish from China, then a green meat radish and then a pink one. I will be eternally surprised if in these times of diversity there is not a rainbow one lurking in the culinary closet waiting to come out.

Not content with an artist's palette of radishes, we can also have a cherimoya or a kiwano, not to mention the graffiti aubergine – presumably from urban farms – or the unfortunately named crapaudine beetroot or the completely unsure of itself, orange plum cherry vine tomato. Coming from a place where broccoli means just about anything grown above ground and turnip if it is from the earth, all these names are

quite a wonder. On the list I was sent were at least twenty things or variants of things that I had never heard of. I still like the idea of trying new tastes, but I suspect that the only people buying them are chefs trying to show off or arrogant foodies as a sort of class oppression. I am still not entirely sure that I would select a dish in a restaurant suggesting it had grated crapaudine rounding it off and I will not be bowled by someone calling chorizo, choritzo. There is not now, nor ever has been a 't' in the word, written or pronounced.

Just so you know, I settled for three day old left overs for my breakfast and not a jicama in sight, which was very welcome after a blistering session at the gymnasium. It was cold there but not as cold as it had been, which was much to do with the blazing sunshine yesterday and a thick cloud cover that moved in overnight. I had missed the session on Monday due to taking the truck in for the welding work that never was and the refrigeration service people turning up as I got back.

I had gone down to the gymnasium as soon as it was light enough. I had foolishly arranged to meet up with a crew member to do some more Tooltrak training, which narrowed my available time for gymming and breakfasting. We could not arrange another time, so it was unavoidable. As it was, it only meant a little less procrastination ahead of going and I had plenty of time in the end.

Taking some tiddler nets down to beach I set out a circuit on the wide expanse of beach we had available to us. I had come the same way yesterday just as the mechanic and a helmsman were about to take the Inshore boat out to attend to repairs to the channel flags. The tide was a little further out at that time and they had to go to the big beach to do the launch. They discovered that so much sand is missing from the beach that there was a substantial step at the bottom of the OS slipway. They just about managed to manoeuvre the Tooltrak over the lip and even then had large boulders to move out of the way.

We had no such trials on the Harbour beach today and the training went exceedingly well. The beach was empty for the entirety of our session, which was fortunate as we pretty much used up the whole of the beach. Our crew member is now sufficiently competent to advance to launching boats, although until passed out by a proper training officer, he will have to be supervised.

I had received a call quite early on from the garage to tell me that the truck was ready for collection. Clearly I was not able to collect it then but as soon as I was free in the afternoon I took back the loan car and brought back the truck. While there was no welding necessary, the team had taken the opportunity for a steam clean, wire brush down and the application of some heavy duty protection. Apparently, this type of vehicle is prone to rust on the underside but I was told our was in particularly good condition and will now stay that way for years to come.

By the time I came back, there was little time to get started on much else. Additionally, the equipment to complete the kitchen extraction system will not arrive

until tomorrow, meaning I will not be able to do the work until Friday. I did, however, have the fan to hand and that needs a fly lead to be connected to it, so I had a look at that. I had already established that the cable I had purchased on Tuesday was a bit hardcore for the work it had to do here but I found some other. When I started to strip the insulation it was immediately apparent that was not suitable either and I will need to trek into town tomorrow for some more.

The truck needs to be fuelled up but I also noticed that the windows, and presumably the bodywork, were lagged in some cloying dust, which I imagine is a product of the protection the underside had and the grinding off the rust. I scrubbed down the windows but the bodywork will need a wash, which means going to a garage in town. It is possible that the pressure washer facilities in garages are affected by the hosepipe ban, which is still in force. If that is the case, I am stymied, although washing it by hand would be an unattractive option. I might dwell on that.

I sent a message to our electrician, just to make sure I had all the bits required for the job and also included a list of the work we would like him to do. I think we are all set, and at last I will be able to tick off a job completed. I can hardly wait.

January 24<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday

Yet another early start and plenty of hours in the day to fritter away and what a glorious day it was to have a good frittering. The rising sun lit up the whole sky, catching on the haziness from one end of the sky to the other and from top to as far near the bottom as I could see. It developed nicely into a brilliant sunshiny day and if it was a tad chilly, well, so what.

As soon as I finished my breakfast, I made my way down to the munitions factory and started making bullets. This does not take an enormous amount of time once the equipment is set up properly but it is mind curdlingly tedious and has the tendency to send me off to some far distance place in my head. While there, it is frighteningly easy to make an error and end up with too much powder in the casing or, worse still, none at all for example. For this very reason, I limit myself to doing 100 at a time that just about holds my full attention.

Believe it or not, I have still not completed placing orders with those suppliers I met at the trade show. Some have yet to contact me after leaving my details with them and some I need to ensure that the orders are placed such that we are not swamped by immediate deliveries. There is also the case where I need to consider what items from a particular supplier we wish to order, such as choosing card designs from a list of hundreds. There is currently no particular rush to place the orders but I do not wish to forget who I met at the show or how to get hold of them.

Having completed a few orders and spoken with another supplier I returned to making rounds of ammunition. I could well have finished with it altogether had I put

my mind to it but we do not like to rush such things, especially if I was to be left at a loose end tomorrow.

It was probably as well that I did not finish because just as I was taking a well-earned rest from doing things, it occurred to me that I had arranged to pick up fish from our Penzance supplier. Mother and I had somehow managed to consume most of our freezer contents between us and we would have been wanting this Friday without some action on the matter. I placed the order last week to make sure our friend had the best opportunity to pick the right time for it. It was he that suggested today.

I hurriedly packed up what I had left lying about in my labours and headed for town, picking up Mother on the way for a bit of a jaunt. We picked up the fish with plenty of time to spare, which is just as well because I had to vacuum pack and label it all, which takes a bit of time. It did indeed and I had started as soon as we got home and finished shortly before tea.

I had hoped to start in the loft today but the items I required for the job did not arrive until later in the afternoon as I was doing the fish and some are still to come. We had stopped off at our electrical wholesaler on the way home and I had collected what I had assumed was the correct items for the wiring of the project. Had I thought about it ahead of time I would have asked the electrician for his shopping list. I am reasonably sure we have the right bits but still have time to get anything else before he turns up, especially as we have not even set a date yet.

By the end of the day, with the main body of the equipment for the ventilation project still had not arrived, I had to reconsider the project for Thursday. We do have the fan, which is not much use by itself, but I can fix the power wire to it in readiness. Also arriving today was a mini chain saw I had only ordered yesterday. This is for the Missus to use in her thinning the hedgerow as she has been stumped before when arriving at gorse branches that resisted all other attempts at cutting. It will also make short work of taking the branches off the bigger Christmas trees, although we will not be able to try it out until we get the truck back. I make note for the Aged Parent, who had near apoplexy at the mention of the circular saw, that we will indeed take all reasonable precautions that the only branches being lopped off are those in the hedges and on the trees.

When I looked back, it had been an unexpectedly full day of doing things. When I did the same review adjusting the success criteria to actual achievement, it looked a bit thin. Sure, I had vacuum packed and labelled maybe 40 portions of fish, made 150 rounds of ammunition and bought a few things but that is not quite the same as ticking off completion of the kitchen extraction system. I still cannot move on to the next project, so it is a tad frustrating and looking ahead to tomorrow, the prospect does not look much better. Perhaps I should take up yoga and learn how to relax – I will do that when I find a minute.

January 23<sup>rd</sup> – Monday



Well, bully for me for being so well organised, not that it helped me a huge heap by the end of the day but three cheers for me anyway. The bleddy hound helped in her own way by getting me out of bed at an early hour giving me plenty of time to be organised. I had done some of it the previous evening but there is no problem with being over prepared, so I thought.

I have already explained that the truck was due to go to the garage to have some welding work done. This had been identified at the last MOT in March as an advisory but when I went back to the garage at the end of the season to book the work in, they could not remember what needed to be done and the bottom of the truck was so lagged in mud that they could not recheck it. We agreed to bring it in today so that they could wash it off, see what was to be done and do it. There were four days pencilled in for the work to be done and we would have a loan car in the meanwhile.

Since we all have to be frugal with our journeys, both in the name of fuel costs and the damage to Mother Earth – demonstrating once again that grumpy shopkeepers can be awake, erm, woken, erm, conscientious as the next man, erm, personage – I had arranged to carry out various other errands in the same direction. Actually, one of the tasks was to not very greenly top up the loan car fuel tank but aside from that I saved the world by going to the bank and a shop I needed to go to on the same trip.

The visit to the shop was to send back two toner cartridges for recycling – gosh, the awokeness goes on and on. Oddly, I had to drop them off at a high street camping shop that was a collection point for the courier the printing company uses. I had decided to go there first as I could then proceed to the bank without carrying the box around – waked and personal energy saving efficiency. As it happened, the bank did not open until late, so I had to wait anyway. With a couple of minutes spare, I looked into a mobile telephone repair shop to see if they had a new screen cover for my mobile telephone, which they did. I could barely see through the existing one. They also had a special machine that fits the type they use and I left the telephone with them while they did it. It was not quite as cheap as replacing the screen protector with one you can purchase off the shelf but it saved me having to try and determine the right one and they made a much better job of it than I could ever have done.

With that and a bit of waiting out of the way, I went to the bank and back to the car park where I momentarily lost where I had parked the car. It only took a minute for me to realise that I was looking for the wrong vehicle. The journey home was unnecessarily slow which was rather unlucky for the fridge and freezer service people who were waiting outside the shop when I got back. It was not that I had completely forgotten they were coming but the arrangement had been left quite loose and I was supposed to get a call to confirm that they were indeed coming. Maybe I missed the call but there was no harm done as the boys had not been waiting long in any case.

It was a half decent day to be running about, although I would have much rather been running up to The Farm to get on with the work there. It was still a bit of a grey day but the temperature had improved, which is always welcome, and while it was grey, it was on the brighter side of the grey spectrum. I seem to recall a bit of clean swell, although I admit I was not paying much attention, and there were a few surfers out there trying their luck somewhere in the middle of the day.

It was a short way into the afternoon that the garage called. It concerned me slightly and I wondered what further expensive work that they had discovered to do for us. I need not have been so suspicious because I was told that having steam cleaned the truck's nether regions they could find no reason to carry out any welding work. The supposition was that when the MOT was done, the underside of the truck was so muddy someone had been mistaken in identifying a problem.

However, not to be cheated out of some work, the new suggestion was to give the bottom a scrub with wire wool to get rid of the rust that was certainly there but only on the surface, and apply a coat of rust protection. This work was not cheap but at least the taking the backend off the truck would not have been wasted work and the truck would have some good protection against the salt air. It is heartening to know that the bottom of the truck will last and last even if the top half crumbles about our ears in short order.

I am so glad that I spent all that time setting out a clever and cunning plan to fill my time over the coming days without a means of getting to The Farm. The purchases I had made so that we could do the kitchen extraction system. I had even set up the munition factory in the shop and refreshed my memory on what I was doing, which in itself was no mean feat. While not entirely wasted, the time would have been allocated a bit differently.

I think Mr Burns, whose night it is very shortly, had something to say about the small gods of grumpy shopkeepers sticking the boot into carefully crafted plans. Unfortunately, the man was clearly inebriated and what he wrote was completely unintelligible, "Gang aft agley". Really. The most galling item of the whole ugly affair is that I topped up the loan car with a tank full of expensive petrol that we will now never use, darn it. If I could get to The Farm, I would siphon it out into the container I emptied for the chipper machine – except I never did buy the siphon I was going to use had the fuel been dodgy. Gang aft agley, indeed.

January 22<sup>nd</sup> – Sunday

It was a grey and overcast day, when the day eventually arrived, but at least it was a smidgeon less cold than the days before it, although it did not seem so at first. I blame the bleddy hound for getting me out of bed far earlier than the previous day, although, to be fair, the Missus disturbed her first with an untimely venture out of bed.

The early start gave me plenty of time to enter another order for the season into our inventory system. I have yet to extract it for the supplier but the hard bit is done. I had the Missus run through the catalogue last night for some additions and we just about have enough for an order. I had hoped to find an alternative to this supplier as their stock barely changes year on year. I did find someone else that we used to use a few years back but they just sold similar items to the first supplier as they did all those years ago. We will keep searching.

It takes a bit of effort to get ready for the range and I somehow end up with four bags I need to take. One of the bags, quite a big and heavy one, is mainly full of stuff I rarely use and a few items that I use each week. It is a candidate for leaving at home, apart from the essentials but if I did that, I would need one of the other items I rarely use, and I would forget to replace the regularly used items and wonder where they were the following week. One day I will bend my mind toward rationalising the kit but that seems like an awful lot of hassle for something I do only four months of the year, once a week.

We all had a whale of a time banging away at targets and tin plates. My grouping in this session were exemplary, if I say so myself, but my timing needs some attention. There again I was never the fastest out of the blocks and creaky bones do not help very much. If I ever come back as a cowboy, I will take note not to be a gunslinger as I think my career would be rather short-lived.

In the afternoon, I practised being Dirty Harry instead. There were far fewer of us in the afternoon session as the pistols we use are hard to come by these days and not everyone has one. There are also problems with the new members gaining firearms licences, some have been waiting the best part of a year. We had a committee meeting halfway through the day and discussed the backlog that the local constabulary have in this regard.

We have been asked to respond to a consultation on the application process, which is currently in disarray. It is not only new licences that are affected. Those making applications for renewal are also stuck in a massive queue. It seems very odd that the bobbies issue a temporary extension to these people when that probably involves as much work as sending out the actual licence. If we were cynical men of a certain age, we might have the opinion that there is some political game play at foot. Such delays and backing up of requests might be used to demonstrate that the licence fee has to increase to pay for more resources to do the work. We are also of the opinion that a much slicker system would probably solve the problem just as easily as an increase in staff and a single system for the country instead of one for each constabulary would be a very good starting point. In the meantime members are stuck in a kind of limbo, new ones unable to buy guns and ammunition and existing licensees restricted and unsure.

With the days lengthening, we are able to run on a little further into the afternoon and we were not so pressed in our afternoon session. By the time the Missus came up to

collect me, we were hard up against tea time and it takes a while to clean the guns and equipment. I also noted that I am fast running out of ammunition. It has lasted well with the tickets in the box suggesting the last manufacturing session was in 2020. Since I only shoot for four months of the year and the last few years have had some interruptions in that, it is no surprise. Since there will be no farming this week, I can add a factory session into my planning – if I can recall how to do it.

The range days are quite wearing, so it was pleasant to relax some into the evening. From a point that we had very little to do this coming week, it now seems there is quite a lot. I shall gird my loins.

January 21<sup>st</sup> – Saturday

The bleddy hound was most kind this morning and awarded me a good half an hour extra in bed. I did not know that I had an extra half an hour until I arrived in the living room having given up on thinking that I may be able to manage the bleddy hound's habits by going back to bed again if it was too early. I managed admirably for years without a clock by the bedside but having had one for two months and now being without it, I have found the absence unbearable. One of the first things I did on my return from our first walk of the day was to seek out and purchase another.

I have given up on having a response from the seller of the original item. If one comes now, I shall push for a refund but I will not hold my breath. It took ages to select another as it seems very few bedside clocks have a dimmer that goes down to near zero. I ensured that this time I knew who the seller was and was contactable before I ordered it.

It has rather crept up on me, but the truck going in for its welding work is imminent and we have to empty the rear luggage space before it goes in. I discovered halfway through the morning that Doing Parcels Dreadfully were going to deliver some more bodyboards in the middle of the day, so I decided that I could move those on to The Farm and clear out the back of the truck in the same session. It turned out that we had the whole of the rest of the consignment delivered, with the driver spitting feathers that his colleague had not completed the task on Thursday (*he* was spitting feathers!). With a bit of inventiveness I was able to fit all seven boxes in the truck and whiz them up to The Farm, which was helpful.

The whole task of readying the truck for the garage brought into sharp focus that we would be unable to do very much next week, in particular we would not be able to get to The Farm to further the building of the raised beds. These are now becoming rather pressing as we will need these complete by the end of March when the shop reopens. It is not that far away, especially with a host of other things to do.

The weather today was perfectly fine, too, which made the time lost at The Farm even more galling. The skies were blue in large parts and the sun has begun to peep over Mayon Cliff a little. Down on the Harbour Beach in the mid morning the sun was

warming large tracts of the sand on an otherwise sharply chilly day. The good weather had attracted quite a few trippers down to The Cove and when I drove out later, the Beach car park was very busy.

The prospect of having a wasted week rather shook me into action on the installation of the extraction system in the kitchen. I reckoned that I could do most of the preparation myself and leave the making of the ceiling hole and the electrical work to our friendly sparks. Before I could start any of the preparation work I would need to buy the kit to do it with.

I had spent some time yesterday on the subject and already knew which fan we were going to get. We now needed ducting, a vent and some connections to which end I drew a diagram of the system to make sure I had not missed anything. It took a while, but I found a likely supplier that had all the bits in one place and gave them a call to check I had got it right. It was as well that I did because as I went through it with our expert I remembered I had to connect it to the smaller bathroom extractor system and would need a connector to do that.

Having checked and double checked, I placed the two sets of orders, one for the fan and the other for the installation. I still need to go to our electrical wholesaler for a fused connection box and a switch to drop down to the kitchen so we can turn it on and off. With all that planning and checking, what could possibly go wrong.

While I was up at The Farm dropping off the bodyboards, I took the opportunity of checking the batteries in the cabin. Having settled the issue with the CCTV camera shutting down because of the fluctuating voltage, it is now shutting down due to insufficient battery power. Two leisure batteries should be more than adequate to run the camera without being topped up for at least a week, so I suspect I have a problem with the batteries. I know that at least one is not holding its charge and the other is more efficient but still not good. The only properly working battery is the one we have regularly used for the light in the store, which runs down to near empty over the course of a summer season. I think that is the only battery we have used properly, and we have not really run down the other two and they have suffered because of it.

I think that the first, and most economic thing to do will be to run the suspect batteries through a conditioner, which I will have to purchase. If that does not work, they will need to be replaced, at that will be expensive. I shall add this to the ever growing list of things to do but without a truck, it will not happen next week.

When the world is against you and it is too early in the day for beer, the thing to do is to collapse onto our nice new electric sofa and watch a movie. The only problem with that is that there are so many duff ones out there now, it is difficult to choose one that you do not feel has been a waste of time watching. I have taken a rise out of Prof for writing down with notes, the books and films she has read and watched – I mean, who does that. Well, it turns out that if I had taken notes on all the films I had

watched I would not have spent half an hour watching a film and thinking that it looked very familiar and only when it came to a highly memorable bit did I recall that I had seen it before.

I went to bed eventually, which was a far less fraught proposition. Perhaps I should do that more often.

January 20<sup>th</sup> – Friday

It took a supreme effort of will to get my legs to take me down the road in the direction of the gymnasium today. It was definitely up a degree or two on yesterday and the breeze had dropped out enough to make little difference in chill factor. There was a bit of a frantic effort initially to not succumb to the cold and come straight back but it did not take long before I was a little more relaxed and got into my stride. I mixed up the circuit to suit the temperature and managed to achieve a blistering session, but it was a hard-fought effort.

It did not help that I had extra long at home waiting for it to become light enough to go to the gymnasium. The bleddy hound had me up at least twenty minutes earlier than is decent and had I known the time then, might have gone back to bed again first. I have, as yet, had no response from the seller of my alarm clock but I must rely on the Missus reading her electronic messages as the Long River Internet shop is her account.

As expected, I had no message from the Doing Parcels Dreadfully company regarding the balance of our delivery and neither have I any method of gaining any information about it. When they split the delivery, they issued a discrete parcel number, which now says that the delivery is complete. Late in the afternoon, I contacted our supplier to ensure Doing Parcels Dreadfully did not try and deliver next week. Our truck is going in for some welding and we will not have it back for a week. The loan car we will have is not big enough to ship the boxes up to The Farm and neither is it robust enough to get up the lane. The enforced delay will probably ensure that the remaining seven very large boxes disappear forever.

Halfway through the morning we discovered that one of the helmsmen for the Inshore boat was making arrangements to take some of the Boat Crew out on a training mission. Given that we are in the middle of training some of the very excellent Shore Crew in the nuances of Tooltrak driving, this dovetailed very nicely with our own plans. I very quickly arranged for one of the team to meet with me at the Lifeboat station to have a go at live boat launching at one o'clock.

The beach was quiet, the tide advancing but still with a good stretch of sand still available and, although there was some ground sea running, it was moderate. These were ideal conditions all round for us on the shore and in the boat. Better still, they on the boat wanted to practise some trailer approaches which meant that we on the

shore could practise the same from our perspective. What a mutually helpful bunch we are.

It seems that it is good news week – apart from parcel deliveries and broken clocks, oh, and being too cold for the gymnasium. Let me start that again, we have had a few good news items this week among the spills and upsets that predominated it. Alongside the excellent Tooltrak training progress and the first Lifeboat launch in a while, we had a positive response from our nominated electrician.

I had a message from him a day or so ago asking if we would say something pleasant about him on one of the review sites, which we were pleased to do; he is one of the few electricians who turns up on time or lets you know if there is a change of plan. We had already asked him to attend during our building work to plumb in a new ring main for the living room and to provide a power point in the attic for the fan we wanted to install to extract nasty niffs from the kitchen. Even though our building work is not going ahead, I could see no reason not to proceed with the work.

While I was completing the review, one of the prompts it provided made me think of the work required for the whole extractor system project. I replied to our man to tell him the review was complete and also asked him if we could widen the scope of the work we had initially spoken with him about to include helping me install the whole system. He replied straight away saying that he would be happy to, including making the hole for the extractor vent in the ceiling of the kitchen. It was really this latter bit that I would have been most unhappy doing myself.

For my part, I need to identify and purchase all the relevant items for the extractor system and give our man a call when we are ready. I had already specified the type and model of fan that was required for the job, so I spent a good chunk of the rest of the afternoon looking for flexible hose, air ducts and a suitable reducer so that I could connect the planned 150 millimetre hose with the existing 100 millimetre from the bathroom. The air in the tube at this point will clearly accelerate, so I will try and fit it as close to the outlet as possible. I am looking for an extra large pea to insert into the tube so that it should whistle loudly every time the kitchen fan is turned on.

As soon as I was back from Inshore Lifeboat launching, the Missus and Mother disappeared off shopping. Before they went, I delved into the freezer to fetch the fish for our tea and discovered we are looking a bit thin in the fish department. With the sea state improving, the markets might ease a little even if we are going into spring tides next week. I will made some enquiries and we have a bulk order of hake and haddock to collect on Tuesday afternoon.

Safe in the knowledge we had replacements, Mother and I enjoyed a belting bit of hake for our tea. The Missus had scampi, which has no fish in it at all; the Missus hates fish.

January 19<sup>th</sup> – Thursday

Having squeezed two days of busyness into yesterday my expectation was that I would freewheel a bit today and that was largely the case. Busy and quiet days make no odds to the bleddy hound and she had me up at the usual early time. It has taken her no time at all the slip back to her old ways.

She is, at least, reasonably consistent, which I am grateful for since I am no longer able to tell what time it is since my clock went up the Swanny. On that bitter note, it is another good reason not to purchase anything from the Long River Internet company. I had investigated returning it, but they want it back in the "exact" same condition it arrived in, which is impossible as I have long since disposed of the packaging and it arrived with a working screen. I have found another option that is to send a message to the seller who I am not permitted to contact directly. If they choose to ignore me I have absolutely no recourse as getting hold of someone at Long River, I can imagine will be difficult, to say the least and they have no incentive to be responsive, either, after all they did not sell me a duff clock.

It was a very odd feeling day. The temperature had almost certainly increased a tad, and that horrific wind had died away. Any breeze left had gone to the north and outside and in, it felt damp and cold, which is not a good combination. I spent the morning wrapped up against it but as I was not being very active, it was filtering into my bones.

I spent some more time fiddling with the orders from the show over the weekend, setting up prices and the like. I had disgracefully omitted to order replacement tea towels last year after we ran out halfway through the year, so I thought that I had better remedy that especially as there is a lengthy lead time. What I could not find was our last year's order and thus any indication of how many I should order this year. Eventually, I had to ask the company and they, very kindly and almost immediately, send me the last invoice. Armed with that I almost immediately sent back the order for the new season, so that is another task out of the way.

At some point during the morning, I had notification that the Doing Parcels Dreadfully company were going to deliver the consignment of bodyboards we had ordered. I had tried desperately to get the supplier to use another carrier but it proved too difficult for them. Instead, we agreed that we would split the eighteen box delivery into two in order to reduce the risk of Doing Parcels Dreadfully messing it up. Oh, we should be so lucky. At the appointed time, the van arrived and I girded my loins to unship nine boxes of bodyboards to take up the hill to The Farm. They delivered two. Apparently, it was far too hard to fit more than that on the truck and they might drop them out tomorrow.

The 'might' worried me and because they have split a single consignment, I probably will not get any notification about when, or if, it will turn up tomorrow. It would have been some help if they had delivered three or four boxes because I could have fitted



the balance into the truck for a single run to The Farm. I will now have to do two runs – if they all turn up, that is.

At some point during the afternoon, the Missus went out the back to ceremonially burn the memory labels from the memory tree. The organic ashes that remain will be taken out on the Lifeboat and scattered by the Missus. For those of you who committed a memory to the tree, you should understand that this is an act of extreme dedication and selflessness, as the Missus gets as sick as a bleddy hound even looking at an oil painting of water. The simile is also a true one as I took the bleddy hound out on a boat once and she was as sick as a parrot. We do not have a parrot, so I cannot confirm that.

She had finished by the time I came back from The Farm, and I met her in the RNLI car park. Wondering what she was doing there, she told me that she had to help our postie who had got her van stuck up Stone Chair Lane. I do not think she was trying a diversion but there are people who live up there who need letters delivered. We are all sorts of resourceful here in The Cove.

I spent a little time finishing off installing the bookcase at the end of the counter in the shop. It did not go quite according to plan because I could not effectively line up the holes on the metal plate at the end of the counter with ones in the batten and the bookcase. Conceivably I could have made new ones, but it was problematic holding the batten in place without it being screwed to something. In the end it was just easier to attach the batten to the counter and the bookcase to the batten, even if the screws I had to use would not withstand much abuse. Hopefully, the bookcase will not be subject to any abuse unless it really is in the way at which point it will be sworn at regularly.

We took an early tea because we both needed to attend the Lifeboat station for the Thursday training meeting. The Missus needed to be there to collect subscriptions for the lottery game she uses to raise money for the comfort fund to add to the counter collection. I needed to be there because for the first time in what seems like months, a training launch had been organised.

The sea state that even yesterday was big and boisterous had calmed overnight into something reasonably benign, although still sporting a bit of ground sea swell at higher states of the tide. Happily, the change in sea condition had coincided with low water at the time of launch and more appropriately, recovery, when the state of the tide would assist in making it less fraught.

There was an intention to launch the Inshore boat as well but there were insufficient crew attending in the end. This somewhat put a monkey wrench in my plumbing as I had intended to continue the training in the use of the Tooktrak launch vehicle. Not letting a simple thing like it not being launched stand in my way, I decided to pretend to launch the Inshore, instead. Two of the intended recipients of the training were

required to help with the launch, so I took the third and we emulated doing a proper launch even going as far as dipping the trailer into the sea.

After the boat had launched, the other two trainees joined in the fun and for the next three quarters of an hour we took it in turns to practise launches and the run up the slipway, which looks easier than it is. I had not previously considered all the elements of launching the Inshore boat as one of the first to do it with the Tooltrak, we had just felt our way. In training others I discovered a wealth of factors to be considered such as the line up on the channel at lower states of the tide to avoid the rocks, aligning with the direction of swell and subtle changes in the height of the blade on the front of the Tooltrak to level the attitude of the boat and to avoid scraping obstacles. It could not be considered rocket science exactly, but there is definitely more to it than meets the eye.

Quite by chance – what am I saying – I meant, with expert planning, we arranged to complete the training, wash down the boat and trailer and tuck in back into its boathouse ahead of the Lifeboat returning. The last of us returned just as the boat was coming up the long slipway after, what I learnt later, was the first stages of a textbook recovery. We assisted in the washing down and putting away of recovery equipment and the lashing down of the boat to stop it escaping in the night. We are, after all, a very coordinated, very excellent Shore Crew.

January 18<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday

When I woke up, or rather, when I was woken up, I had not expected such a day full of things to do. In fact, I do not think that I had planned in anything at all and was just going to let it go with the flow.

This worked out alright initially because by the time the bleddy hound and I had made ourselves ready and headed out of the door all the rain, sleet and hail had gone. We definitely had hail at some point during the night because an ice drop fell on my ear at one point. I think I shall have to rig up some sort of canopy over my head for such occasions and then sleep without interruption – apart from bleddy hound interruptions.

Due to the fact I had nothing planned, I took my time getting breakfast and conducting whatever administration had become necessary. I knew that I wanted to take the last of the untrained trio for a run on the Tooltrak. This was the crew member who was not present on Thursday. I sent him a message asking if he was free at midday, which he was not but could make it 45 minutes earlier. I think that it was at this point that things became rather interesting.

I had already sent an order to our butcher in St Just asking for various things but especially meat for the bleddy hound. Normally, she exists on mince and chicken that we have in the shop. During previous winters we have had sufficient left over to see her through. This year I did not do a top up at Christmas and as a consequence

we ran out. She has been making do with lettuce leaves and bowls of gruel but has started salivating at my fingers when I give her a treat. I thought that I had better expedite replacing her dinners.

Getting over to St Just takes ten minutes and so does getting back, I would no doubt stop for a chat in the butchers, so I had to factor that in, and I wanted to go to the hardware shop to get a siphon the purpose of which I will explain in a minute. This left me little time and certainly no time for my post breakfast cup of tea and get back in time to take my compatriot training on the Tooltrak.

I left as soon as the last morsel of breakfast had been consumed and proceeded, within the stated speed limits, to St Just. When I arrived at the butcher, I discovered that he had not seen my order message and therefore nothing was ready to collect. He told me that he would drop it out tomorrow and I would take some mince home to make the bleddy hound's tea. It seemed a fair deal until I remembered that our road was closed. I told him that if he could not get through, I would run down to the end to meet him and bring back the order from there.

Our much anticipated road closure was very much an anti-climax. A truck arrived early doors to add a 'road closed' sign to the advanced notice and to erect it again in the wind, but the army of other workers did not arrive until the middle of the morning. I had seen them in convoy coming the other way as I left for St Just. Even when I returned, apart from more obvious 'road closed' signs, which pretty much everyone ignored, nothing much had changed. Disappointingly, there was no diversion up Stone Char Lane and just as disappointing, there was no road closure.

Happily, though, I had returned in time to carry out our training session and even better, the Harbour car park was empty. What really slowed us up was that we could not get into the Inshore boathouse. The door at the side is notorious for sticking and even unlocked we had no success in opening the door and we tried for ten minutes. In the end the regular Lifeboat mechanic turned up and, some pushing and shoving later, had the door open. I concluded that there must be a knack to it which I did not have because we had also tried pushing and shoving but to no avail.

For the next fifteen minutes we traversed the car park making various manoeuvres that we might make during normal operations. Ideally, we would use the beach but the tide, like on Thursday night, was not with us. Because we were just two and we had to use the public – or rather private highway as it is beyond the Lifeboat station – one of us had to act the part of banksman. I drove the machine out to the car park but let our more practised crew member drive it back again while I paced ahead. It was a most worthwhile exercise, even if it had not taken that long to perform. Everyone necessary is now on the same page and we will proceed at pace at bringing all the close by people to the stage where they can attend urgent calls and launch the Inshore without me having to lock people in the shop in error.

Having already wrapped up warm for the training, I felt that it would be sensible to proceed with the other outstanding jobs of the day. The most important of these was to check the operation of the chipping machine so that we could get shot of the Christmas trees. I also wanted to replace the shelves at the end of the counter with the bookcase we had liberated from its job in the middle aisle. It will overhang the entrance to the till area, but it was there throughout the Christmas opening and was not inconvenient. It provides a little extra shelf space and looks somewhat more alluring than the homemade shelving unit that had been there some years and that is where I started.

I had also wanted to finish before I moved on, but it seems that a batten is required so that I can screw it to the end of the counter. I did have an almost perfect bit of timber that would serve the purpose, but it was a tad too long. The saw is up at The Farm.

That, then, was my next destination and I loaded the old shelves into the truck and squeezed in the last Christmas tree and headed off up the hill. At least the lane was not blocked by fallen debris to slow me up and the entrance to The Farm less slippery with its new ground savers. I reversed up to the barn leaving sufficient space to eject the middle size Christmas tree and set the chipper up in.

One of my main concerns was the unleaded petrol required to run the beast. I knew we had some up at The Farm, but it had been there a while and it quickly degrades if it is not used. I had thought about replacing but that brings its own problems of what to do with the old stuff, so I decided to risk using it, which is where the siphon comes in. My cunning plan was that if the machine started to cough and splutter due to degraded fuel, I would siphon it out and go back to plan A. As it was, the machine worked perfectly on the old fuel.

What was slightly more of a challenge was complying with the size restrictions that the machine comes with. When I shared what I was doing with the Missus on the video telephone, she was disappointed that I was not feeding the whole tree into the hopper at the top. It is a little confusing because the big hopper at the top is actually for bulk but is restricted to items no greater than 1 centimetre thick. The thicker branches, up to 10 centimetres, go into the much slimmer tube at the size where there are chopped into more manageable bits before going to the same chipper as the 1 centimetre feed. If we wanted a machine to feed trees into the top, we would have had to shell out considerably more cash and had to have a bigger barn, too.

The upshot of these restrictions is that the trees had to be cut down to size before I could feed them into the machine. I too, had not anticipated the whole process properly, either and was improperly equipped for the job. I could have had a pair of secateurs for the smaller branches, although I did have a small rip saw for the bigger ones. The whole tree needed to be stripped and the trunk cut down too. The last half a foot of the trunk was just too thick and will need to be treated separately. I will have more of the trunk left for the other two trees which are much bigger.

The Missus had asked me to lay the resulting chippings by the greenhouse door. When I looked at the teaspoonful of chippings my completed work had resulted in, you probably would have missed it completely had I set it by the door. Much of it was pine needles anyway that will blow away in the wind. We will need to chip a whole forest if we wish to be laying paths but I suspect Christmas trees were not the best example of what should be going in the chute. The process will mean trial and error, but it is not too difficult to set up, which hopefully means it will be used a bit.

By the time I had finished fuelling, oiling and stripping, light was beginning to fade and tea time was rapidly approaching. I might take the day off tomorrow.

January 17<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday

Oddly, it did not seem like a Tuesday. Being away for the weekend has upset my equilibrium and I am struggling to know what happens when in our weekly cycle. It may have been the cold that pervaded every corner of the flat overnight. It must have been cold because the bleddy hound did not want her fan on last night.

I did not notice last night when I retired for the night but in the early hours of the morning the absence of my bedside clock that I had jumped through hoops to find, was quite obvious. I had no idea in the end at what time the bleddy hound had me out of bed and had to wait until we were in the living room to discover that a weekend with the Missus had broken her of her very early starts – it was nigh on seven o'clock.

It was long into the morning that I returned to the scene of the crime in the bedroom to discover that my clock was not missing at all, just the numbers at the front had disappeared. I had already concluded that the power to it was still working because my mobile telephone that plugs into it was fully charged. I tinkered with the brightness thinking that someone had turned it down, but it was not that. I unplugged everything and brought it into the living room where I could examine it more closely. Having tried various things, I reached the conclusion that it was broken. I assume there must be at least six months of warranty on it, so I reported it to the suggested message address on the bottom of the unit. I currently await a response.

I spent a moderate amount of time on the orders that I had placed at the show. I kicked myself that I had not taken copies of all the ones I placed and will now have to wait for them to arrive before I can update the detail on the inventory. I worked on the information that I did have and left it at that.

I know that it was procrastination and that there are better things that I could have been doing but we have a number of DVD films and programmes that need to be sorted and got rid of. It was a lot easier than kitting up to go out in the cold and do what I should have been doing but my excuse is that I had to wait to find out what the Missus wanted to do with the day and she was at the other end of the corridor. It

would probably have been rude to go about chasing her, so I was waiting until she came to the living room. I am sure that makes sense to you, dear reader.

Eventually, however, it was clear that I could procrastinate no longer. The tree shredder that we purchased had waited in the barn long enough and now that I had the oil for it, there was no further excuse not to do it. I grabbed my socket set on the expectation that the provided tools would probably be insufficient alone and some warm clothes and headed for The Farm.

My warm clothes very quickly got cold again but I found that the cabin was as warm as toast when I dropped in to place the milk in the cool cupboard. I am not entirely sure how that works. We have a very standard kitchen unit with a sink in the top of one third, an open shelf on the right and in the middle a cupboard with a shelf where we keep the leisure batteries. This cupboard remains at a fairly constant cool temperature, even in the blazing heat of the summer. It is remarkable. We keep my beer in there and, if there is room, the milk.

Sadly, I was not working in the cabin. My first job was to deploy the ground savers of which I had bought 30. Of course, having deployed them as efficiently as possible it became clear that I should have purchased 90 and will probably have to return when we find the ones I have placed not doing what we hoped. The main issue with them is that they need bedding in. Even running the truck over them a few times does not quite do it and there is always one or two that twist and poke up because the ground is softer on one side than the other. I did what I could and may need to revisit them if they fail to lie down after a few days of use. I drove over them a final time and parked down by the barn where I would be working.

The putting together of the shredder was largely straight forward. Most of it was whole in the packaging but things like the wheels, the feeder and the exit chute needed to be bolted on. It came with a little bag of tools, which although contained some decent spanners, needed some bolstering. Most of the nuts and bolts needed a spanner on one side and another – or my ratchet ring spanner – on the other. At one point, inserting the axle, a serious lump hammer was needed to align the holes on the frame – they never mentioned that in the instructions. While it was not too challenging it did take quite a bit of time to complete and I was not slacking, either. I had done a good job judging from the fact that there was only a small bag of nuts and washers left over. Light was beginning to fade at the end, and I will have to return to finish off with adding the engine oil and the petrol and to give it a bit of a dry run.

There was just time to run the bleddy hound out before tea by the time I got home. Tomorrow our road closure starts – that no one will know about because the signs fell down on the day they were erected – so that will be fun, especially when we discover they really have run the diversion up Stone Chair Lane. You will hear it here first, folks. Oh what jollity.

January 16<sup>th</sup> – Monday

I managed a bit of a lie in this morning, but it was still only at the later edges of the time the bleddy hound gets me up. This was probably just as well because I had to fit a gymnasium session in and then have some breakfast before I headed off.

Yes, the hotel has a gymnasium, and it does not even have a tin roof. It is also air conditioning that allows for a moderate working temperature in there or to put it another way, is not bleddy freezing cold. There is some kit in there that I am not familiar with and would not have a clue how to operate but there are weights and a rowing machine, which is sufficient for a bit of a cut down but wholesome, blistering session.

I ruined it all by indulging in a fried breakfast, although I did favour the poached eggs over the fried and did not have it piled up. That reminds me about the meals some people were having last night. The hotel is clearly popular locally for its carvery, and we have enjoyed one or two since we have been visiting. I know I eat less than once I used to but even so, I could not believe the amount of food people had piled onto their plates. I am sure that they would not eat like that at home or indeed feel comfortable having consumed it – if they managed to finish the plate at all.

I would have made straight for the road home, but the Missus had placed an order with the Swedish homeware store, the nearest to us being in Exeter and I had been charged with collecting it. Fortunately for me, the store is but a metaphorical stone's throw from the hotel and easily driven to. It would have made no difference had it not been, I would still have had to go. In the past we have made detours of tens of miles to go to the then nearest that was in Bristol. I should write to the store and tell them how grateful I am that they built one in Exeter and not in Penzance.

The details of the journey home I will spare you. There was very little traffic and only a short shower or two to slow my progress. I made a detour of my own when I arrived at Camborne, and not just to kiss the ground but to visit the rather marvellous emporium of Macsalvors. I think I have explained before that it is a hardware store that sells absolutely everything imaginable. On this occasion all I wanted was some ground savers, square plastic plates that are pushed into the earth to stop it being churned up by vehicles travelling over it but still allow the grass to grow. The entrance to The Farm is showing no signs of recovery after our neighbour ran his earth mover over it multiple times while dumping the 100 tons of topsoil at the end of the field. Hopefully, once I have the plates down it will stop it getting worse and give the grass an opportunity to grow back.

The weather worsened the further west I got, which was not particularly encouraging, but Mother told me that it was actually improving from the morning when the rain included hail stones. Grateful for small mercies I took an ungrateful bleddy hound out almost as soon as I got home and we took a wander on the smooth sand of the Harbour beach. This rather indicated that the rough sea state that we left behind two

days ago was still in evidence. Later in the tide it proved to be the case but I would say there was definitely some improvement noticeable. The wind also had moderated to the point that I hardly noticed it was there, which was definitely an improvement, although the temperature that had dropped considerably at Exeter has also dropped dramatically in The Cove, too.

Then, after a brief time back at home, our world returned to normal again.

January 15<sup>th</sup> – Sunday

Unsurprisingly, I awoke at the usual time bleddy hound or no. I have done this for the past 361 days and the previous 361 as well. I clearly will take more than one night to kick the habit. I was able to lie there resting for a further half an hour and did not have to take a reticent bleddy hound out into the rain, which was definitely a bonus.

I am sure, dear reader, if you look up my Diary entry for this weekend last year you will read an entry that would be the same as this one, should I run it through to its logical conclusion. There is no particular joy in visiting a trade show, especially one that we had attended nineteen times previously, although not always in the same location. Writing about it is probably akin to flogging an expired equine but I will give you a flavour of this year's differences.

The show was a little smaller than it was last year, which in turn was smaller than the last. When we first went there were three halls and now there is only one. Last year, I made the circuit and noted some new suppliers some of which we purchased from later. The new suppliers involved were all greeting cards providers, so you might imagine I did not have great expectations from this year.

Happily, I was surprised, and it was the most productive show I had visited in some time. I placed orders with several suppliers there and then, which means they greatly impressed. I did note the absence of some of our current suppliers but that was no particular disadvantage as we largely know what we will get from them anyway. Of the new suppliers some had bright and innovate products to choose from and they will be adorning our shelves, probably from Whitsun this year. We are going to have to be cautious about buying for Easter after nearly catching a cold last year. We had a mountain of stock delivered just before and there being insufficient trade to pay for it from the holiday. It was a close run thing, I can tell you.

I was done traversing the aisles by around two o'clock, so went back to do another circuit in reverse. I have found in the past that a second look is sometime worthwhile and it did prove to be the case this time. It was not until I was packing my bag before I made my way out that a family arrived with a small child in tow. She excitedly pointed to product hanging behind me, a small, sequined clutch bag and then other on the same display. It struck me that perhaps I should acquire one - a small child that is, we have done the clutch bags before - for next year to pick out the best sellers for our shelves. I made a mental note.



As the Missus pointed out when I called her from the truck, I could quite easily have travelled back the same day. It is worth consideration, but it does pile on some pressure while visiting the show and on the occasion where there is something interesting that bears discussion, I would feel compelled to foreshorten it in order to be on the road.

January 14<sup>th</sup> – Saturday

The rain was hammering down on the window in the bathroom when I first got up. I made a note to get geared up for waterproofness when I took the bleddy hound out. It promptly stopped raining but at least I was protected from our continuous wind. Well, that saved me a bit of typing.

Despite the rain having moved through, it was still very gloomy outside and the living room lights stayed on long into the morning, or at least as long as I was there for. Mother joined me before long and commented on the gloom, much I just did. That relentless wind, being relentless and all, is not helping and the sea state is still bashing seven bells out of anything it comes into contact with, easing off at low water for another go on the flood.

I lingered long enough to finish my meagre packing – I am only away for two nights – and to have a spot of breakfast to sustain me on my journey. I met up with a neighbour on the way back who drives lorries long distances around the country and warned me of roadworks at the junction I was to get off the A30 at when I arrived at Exeter. I thanked him but it did not make a great deal of difference to the journey as there was so little traffic about. I had imagined that the weather would be a deal worse given the dire warnings issued by the television weather forecaster. It is a good job that I do not fret about such things too much as I would have worried over nothing at all.

I wasted no time on my arrival booking a taxi to take me into the city. I had elected to be carried as the traffic is heavy on a Saturday in the city and parking the truck would be problematic as well. I am sure no one particularly likes driving in heavy traffic but living west of Camborne, heavy traffic is a few cars behind a tractor. Even when I lived in West London, traffic was never as bad as it was in Exeter today. I need to remind myself that it is twenty years since I was last in London traffic, so things have moved on a little.

As it transpired, the trip was fruitless. I had four cameras and the camera shop was interested in none of them. There is a fungus that grows in camera lenses if they are kept in less than perfect conditions, such as lofts – or attics – I was told. It was likely to be true as the shop assistant was not trying to deflate any price he might pay me; he did not want the cameras at all. I could have regrouped and put them on an Internet auction site, but I would have had to declare the fungus now that I knew and apart from that, I really did not want to cart them all home again. The assistant, who

was most polite and apologetic, suggested the charity shop across the street, which seemed like a plan.

When I got to the door there was a sign explaining that the shop did not want any further donations today. This was not looking good that I could not even give the cameras away. Luckily, there was a British Heart Foundation shop two doors down who clearly were not so heartless and took the lot without even looking at them. It had cost me two taxi fares to get shot of them when I could have dropped them in a skip at the, erm, household waste recycling centre for free. At least this way someone might have some pleasure out of them and as for the cost, well, I have had nigh on 100 years combined pleasure out of them, which is probably pretty good value all told.

I perused just one shop to see if I could get another jacket like the one I was wearing at the time. I wear it indoors and out during the winter months because it is warm and comfortable. It would be good to have another similar so that I can put the current one in the wash occasionally. I am sure it will do until Spring and will keep the flies off my pasty.

There was not much to do when I got back to the hotel so, through the wonders of modern technology, I managed to finish off a television serial that I have been struggling to get through. The evening is predictable after so many years of staying at the same hotel and the Missus knew exactly what I had for tea when I called later in the evening. I admit I have the same two dishes off the menu each year and I look forward to them. It is hardly repetitive having them but once a year – no different from the same Christmas dinner each year before you mock. I have taken to having a little nightcap malt whisky to take to bed with me, which is a fine addition to the tradition.

I shall look forward to not having a bleddy hound leap on me at early o'clock tomorrow morning and will have a glorious lie in. Another fine tradition while I am away.

January 13<sup>th</sup> – Friday

The rain was hammering down on the window in the bathroom when I first got up. I made a note to get geared up for waterproofness when I took the bleddy hound out. It promptly stopped raining but at least I was protected from our continuous wind.

I had intended to get ahead of the day because I had quite a bit to get through. Of course, it did not quite happen that way but I did manage to get away from The Cove before the middle of the day. In that time, I had shifted the remaining boxes down to the shop. These are the contents that will go to the auction house and to charity shops – probably after we become fed up with tripping over the boxes on the shop floor and shortly before we open again for the new season, but we live in hope.

I even expended some time in cleaning the inside of the truck windows that every time there is a bit of bright sunshine in front of us or glare in darkness, we vow we will do at the next opportunity but never do. Unless, of course, this was the next opportunity. The windows are much better for it, and I can actually see things in the wing mirrors. There is bound to be a vindictive gull or some errant salt spray that obscures the view before my journey tomorrow.

As explained in this very journal, the truck had been loaded with its cargo for the, erm, household waste recycling centre yesterday. There only remained a few additional items to throw in and then I was good to go, as I said, before the middle of the day. I slipped into something more comfortable, DIYman overalls and wellies as those refuse sites can be a tad muddy, especially the scrap yard where I was headed, and pointed the truck east.

It was during the journey that I decided to go to the scrapyards first. It made sense as I wished to circle around into Hayle to pick up some comestibles for my breakfast tomorrow from the very good butcher there – they also do very good pasties but I girded my loins against such things as it would spoil my hotel appetite and cause ructions at home. The happy souls at the scrap yard always seem most surprised that I only wish to dump my waste metal there and not seek any recompense for it. It is worth more than money to have them there and, frankly, what I have dumped there over the years would probably realise pence all combined.

Next up was the household waste recycling centre after stopping to refuel the truck at one of the independent petrol stations in Hayle first. It is a few pence more than Tesmorburys, but I would rather keep the funds local. I am sure it is all local people at the recycling centre as well and today's nominated operative to ask for my permit was the first one I have ever seen there whose previous job did not appear to be sentry on the Berlin Wall. This one was most personable and helpful. It did not take long to dump our collection of goodies since I had sorted them into boxes previously. I had forgotten that television screens need to be kept separate, but I remembered just before I dropped them in the wrong skip.

With all that out of the way I returned via St Buryan to pick up Mother. She lives in a bungalow with a bit of elevated green out the front crossed by tarmac paths. For probably many good and some bad reasons, some residents drive up onto the grass to get closer to their front doors, we have done this ourselves previously. The problem in winter, when the ground is waterlogged, is that it quickly gets torn up and becomes a quagmire. Additionally, larger vehicles find it necessary to mount the kerb and completely destroy the grass along the edge and this is where Mother usually gets into the truck when we pick her up.

Today, my visit must have been preceded by a convoy of heavy lorries because the verges all along had been churned to a muddy morass. Mother was, as usual when she sees us arrive, halfway across the grass by the time I had turned around in the cul-de-sac. I stopped her from coming further and told her I would meet her at the

end of the path, returning on foot for her bags. Even the end of the path was lagged at each side where vehicles had regularly mounted the pathway and churned up the verges. It is not a happy situation and I had to park blocking the road for Mother to safely get in. It needs some money spent on it to widen the road and prevent either prevent or make arrangements for vehicles driving up to houses. That is very unlikely to happen.

With Mother ensconced with the Missus for the weekend, I made preparations to travel beyond the bounds of the known universe the other side of Camborne. I had found time to clean up the flash gun that I am taking to the camera exchange that I had left batteries in for several years. After I had been able to extract them with pliers, the compartment cleaned up nicely. I am also taking my very first single lens reflex camera that I most latterly used alongside a more modern one for black and white film. This I bought from the same chain in London in 1974 or 1975. Had I retained the receipt I might have been tempted to ask them for a refund.

Having dealt with what I hoped was all the necessary preparations, I gave myself the afternoon off. I know, such decadence.

January 12<sup>th</sup> – Thursday

Crikey! That wind seems to go on forever. It was still blowing a hooley when we got out this morning and although it softened a little by the afternoon it was still quite robust. The bleddy hound was definitely not impressed and I could see her swaying as the gusts attempted to knock her over. She still insisted on sitting outside the shop in the driving but not too heavy rain until I whisked her up the steps.

That rain hung in there, casting a gloom over the bay for most of the morning. In the afternoon, the skies cleared to blue, but it still felt damp in the air and a mite chilly in the breeze. That raging sea we had during the night by the sounds of it tamed a little at around low water but was still causing a big white mess over Cowloes and in the waves chasing into the beach. It was back again later in the evening just as ferocious as before.

After I had breakfasted, we set to again with the jumble of boxes that we had left lying about the place yesterday. It was not before time because I had left three big containers behind the curtain we put up to keep the heat in the living room. Every time I went into the corridor, I bumped into them forgetting they were there. We ended up with sufficient in two more containers to make a trip to the tip, sorry, household waste recycling centre worthwhile. From there it will be recycled into an incinerator in St Dennis once it had been broken down into a size that will fit through the furnace door. Thankfully, someone will plant a tree somewhere and we will all be carbon neutral again. I shall also be taking one of the old display racks from the shop which will give the operator apoplexy for sure. I intend to drop it off at the scrap metal yard at Wheal Alfred afterwards.

It took a while to sort through the remaining boxes and to have a quick geek at photographs depicting a four to six year old grumpy shopkeeper in the making. We were not a wealthy family, and it was clear from the photographs spanning a few years that there was a fair bit of hand-me-downs going on from my elder sibling. It is a wonder that I am not a grumpier shopkeeper having spent my formative years in my sister's old dresses.

At last, we ended up with a selection of disposal boxes, some for the auction house, some for charity and the swap shop at St Buryan old bus shelter. Then there was the box for the tip, sorry, household waste recycling centre general waste and another for the electrical skip they have there. I had already separated out the camera equipment and had spoken with the shop in Exeter that may potentially take them off our hands for a small consideration – hopefully not that small, though.

Talking of cameras, I had noticed earlier in the day that our CCTV up at The Farm had ceased to be in contact with us. I had assumed a camera failure again but somewhat more serious than the short interruptions we were getting before because this time it had been out for more than a day. I had to go out to get some milk for the Missus and Mother who will be at home alone when I trek off at the weekend and will not be able to get any unless they walk up the hill. Since I was heading up that way I would drop in at The Farm and walk the bleddy hound at the same time. It took a little process of elimination but it became quickly clear that we had run out of credit on the camera's SIM card. Had we been still able to use the data only SIM this would not be a problem, but the new camera is incompatible and needs a normal telephone SIM, which is subject to limits.

The problem had come when I changed to camera configuration to activate for any movement and not just human. Something has gone awry with the logic, and it had recorded to our remote server every moment of every day and consequently used up all our data allowance two weeks short of the renewal date. I quickly set the configuration back to where it was after I had bought some more data allowance. I will have to enquire where I went wrong because it should only have sent alarm data up the line, not everything.

Still, the trip was not wasted as the bleddy hound had a little wander about and got in some of her precious fresh air. I was sitting in the cabin arranging the additional data allowance when she wandered in making it quite clear that it was time to go back home again. She really does dislike it up there unless Mother is up there with her, too.

When I got back home, I packed all the goodies for the, erm, household waste recycling centre into the back of the truck. By request, I carried the shredder upstairs so that the Missus could make a start on the old sets of accounts that can now be destroyed. She had gone through a phase of burning them at The Farm but had found that problematic when the large sheafs of paper would only burn around the edges. It is more time consuming, less fun but more efficient to shred them

apparently and there are several years to go through. So much for Making Tax Digital.

All that remains to do now is to find a suitable charity shop we can park outside and make an appointment with the auction house. I have no idea if we have to sort the goods first or just deliver a series of boxes. We can then truly say we are done, and it will make our moving our process later in the year much more straight forward and less work.

A call from a neighbour reminded me that I was going to finalise finding out the information about road access during the closures of Cove Road next week. I had already received a reply to my message from the much maligned council earlier in the day, which was a pleasant surprise telling me that emergency access was arranged but they could not tell me anything regarding resident access, which was not. They did, however, point me at the 'undertaker of the works' a communications company with a telephone number to call and an address to write to. I called. A very pleasant lady answered the telephone and very quickly assured me that residents will be allowed through if we asked the team on the ground very nicely. Given that there are a quite a few people who need to traverse the sea front road during the day, the works crew will be running to and fro putting a steel plate over their hole every few minutes. I did not ask about the bus service, which was remiss of me.

We attended a busy Lifeboat training session in the evening. With the ongoing poor sea state, there was no launch but two of the very excellent Shore Crew who require training on the Tooltrak Inshore Boat launch vehicle were at the meeting. This gave us an excellent opportunity to run the vehicle out and put the crew through some familiarisation routines.

It was a very clear night but with the Harbour beach inundated with tide, we elected to use the nearly empty Harbour car park for the practise. The machine is a transport made for two, so while my learned colleague trained one of the unpractised crew, I stood about with the other gazing at the stars. Happily, there were many to gaze at as when the very bright Tooltrak lights were not shining in our eyes the darkness of the car park revealed a whole host of heavenly bodies. Some of the planets are still lined up and Mars and Jupiter were clear to see. Between them we had to imagine Uranus and Neptune sitting among the constellations of Aries and Pieces, he said knowledgably with the help of a friend's mobile telephone app. When we were not star gazing we could look out over the charging waves running through the Tribbens under the glare of the Tooltak lights.

We spend the best part of an hour with our practise and retired the machine back to the shed in the RNLI car park. One of the advantages of using the Harbour car park for practise is that we did not have to wash down the kit afterwards. The disadvantage being we cannot practise the launch sequence or the running up the slipway, which can be tricky getting the engine revs right and lifting the blade at the front just enough at the same time so that it does not scrape the flag stones.

I retired home at last where I could be reminded of all the lifting and moving of boxes that still remained of tomorrow. There is also the trip out and the trying to remove the leaking batteries from the small flashgun I let fester in the loft for years without removing them. I also set to deeply wondering what the difference was between an attic and a loft. Fundamental though it is, I do hope that does not keep me awake.

January 11<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday

The bleddy hound was out of the trap earlier than usual this morning. I may have made the schoolboy error of turning over in bed at the inappropriate moment. That will do it every time. It was blowy outside, but it was not raining until we were on our way back. I know that sounds like something of a journey when in reality 'on our way back' was from near the slipway corner of the Lifeboat station but 'on our way back' also involves sitting outside for ten minutes while she enjoys the wind in her hair. I would join her but there is an element of that pairing missing for me. In the end I scooped her up and carried her upstairs before we were both wet through.

There followed the usual hiatus while I waited for it to become light so that I could venture to the gymnasium. Luckily, the rain was short lived and I only had to put up with the wind. I met up with the Lifeboat mechanic on the way out and we discussed the nature of the road closure. I tried calling the much maligned council later in the day but they were having none of that pesky rate payers coming around asking darn fool questions. I had to send an electronic mail instead that will no doubt meet its requirement for a response later than the works are due to commence.

I was blown down to the gymnasium after our brief discussion but not quite as robustly as I had been on Monday – I would wait until later in the day for that. It was not quite as cold as it was on Monday, either, but I still needed to keep an extra layer on for the duration of the blistering session. I returned to an unusually healthy breakfast as well, using up the last of the smoked salmon I had taken from the freezer to mix with some olives, capers and other greenery with a glug of olive oil and lime juice.

Thus fortified, I resolved to crack on with emptying the garage to the rear of us that we had been loaned the use of to store our gear while our building work was to continue. The Missus had made a start last week but other stuff got in the way. It would have been somewhat churlish to leave it any longer given the kind gesture from our neighbour. By the time the Missus was ready to help with shovelling it in through the backdoor and onto our bed, I had extracted most of the boxed and bagged goods and left them by the backdoor in anticipation. The remainder was either more delicate – our Tiffany lamps left by the previous owner – and the big cabinet that sits in the living room and required both of us working in concert. It was also necessary due to the increasingly vicious breeze that had kicked in which had

already blown some of the lighter items off down the slope. By the middle of the afternoon, the garage was empty but we still needed to shift the gear to its resting place. Most of the boxes will go to the loft and the cabinet and lamps back to the living room.

In my eagerness to empty the garage, what I had not anticipated was that there was still stuff in the loft that needed removing, sorting and putting back minus the stuff we can do without – hopefully most of it. The Missus had loaded the stuff from the garage onto our bed, which nearly filled the area. We shuffled things around so that I had a corner in which to put the additional boxes et al from the loft as the Missus handed them down to me. This continued until I could not move, not only for the lack of available space but also because my body was supporting the additional boxes so that they did not collapse around me thus trapping me in my corner.

We now had the entire contents of the loft in the bedroom, minus the stuff we had sorted and returned to the loft last week. The first task was to start sorting the wheat from the chaff and somehow putting the finished boxes to one side when there was not a one side to put them to.

With time running out before evening, the bed still unusable, we elected to move the unfinished boxes to the spare bedroom, the bathroom and the passage that runs out to the living room – oh, and the living room itself, of course.

I had been surprised to find more LP records amongst the remaining boxes in the loft, just when I thought I had finished sorting these into those I could sell and those I wanted to transfer to digital. There were also another two boxes of CDs, which I will transfer to computer and then sell for our countertop collection in the shop during the year. If I were to guess, I would say there were close to 100 CDs and probably quite a few more LPs. With the best will in the world, I am not going to be able to catalogue them all and sell them on the Internet auction sites. I shall probably take them into town where I am sure there is a record shop and seeing what I can get for them as a collection.

While some of the things can be dumped, if we can be brutal enough, much is too good for that and will be palmed off to charity shops or to the auction house in town. I suspect that the auction house pile will be a considerable size and we still have items that we lifted from the Aged Parent to convey there as well. In truth this has been outstanding for more than a year, but we will have to go now else we will be constantly tripping over it.

One of the things that delayed us in our endeavours was that we discovered a box full of photograph albums. This is a strange thing because someone – almost certainly the Missus – had painstakingly put the good old-fashioned prints into the album in the first place. I was even surprised to find many of mine from prior to our relationship pasted there going back to 1991.



The strange thing to which I allude is why we do this. In most homes, I doubt that there is sufficient room to put these within easy arms reach, so almost certainly they are stored away in dark corners and lofts. I could feel the endorphins pinging around my brain as the rusty synapses of long distant memories fired into life as I perused the mostly unfaded memories on photographic paper. I would probably do this more often if the albums were to hand – especially as I grow older and the memories are less prominent than they once were, but who has the space.

Ideally, of course, we would digitise them but even then, I have digital photographs stowed away in the Internet's attic, the cloud, that are far more accessible but are far too numerous to peruse. Even if I were to digitise all the photographs we have in the physical albums, I would need to devote some serious time in cataloguing them so that they could easily be found as they would not be automatically dated as they are now. I think I will look forward to twenty years' time when we send some fit youth into the attic to retrieve our boxes for us and I can look at them all over again.

Gosh, dear reader, I seem to have got carried away. You not only know our daily and seasonal routines but the contents of our attic as well, now. Be assured, I will not be taking you into my sock, or underwear drawer any time soon.

You will be pleased to know that I resisted the urge to delve into my record or CD collection and put my feet up for the rest of the evening. It was too late to watch any lengthy television programme, so I read my book with the roaring of the ocean pervading through the double glazing and the wind howling in the eaves, soothing my troubled brow.

January 10<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday

Well, if this was the worse day of the week, as advertised by our fine, upstanding weather forecasters, the remains of the week should be high summer-like at the very least.

I had cast caution to the wind when I stepped out this morning with the bleddy hound as I did not even bother to have a geek through the window before I did so. It was breezy and there was some moisture in the air but it was considerably milder than it was yesterday at about the same time. Even when day dawned, the worst it could throw at us for most of the day was a mist that had a little damping in the air. It was the wind that was the dominant feature and it increased through the day to the later part of the afternoon, reaching around fifty miles per hour at its peak.

It was not the most exciting day in prospect, mainly as I had not made plans because the forecast was so dire. I was aware that the Missus needed to go shopping as well, so I was not going anywhere. Instead, I devoted myself to the rewarding task of finishing off our main supplier's order and the one for our wetsuits and bodyboard supplier. Both of these need a bit of advance notice whereas almost all the others

can wait until a little later. Much of it will not even be a twinkle in my eye until I have been to the Exeter trade show which will be this coming weekend.

I whizzed the bleddy hound out again in the early part of the afternoon, although, whizz, as an adjective for taking the bleddy hound anywhere these days is a mite misleading. She wanders and sometimes, like this afternoon, she wandered a little farther than usual, which today got us almost as far as the Roundhouse. On our way back I noticed the sign that had not been there in the morning. It advised that Cove Road would be closed between 18:00 and 08:00 from 18<sup>th</sup> of the month until 20<sup>th</sup>. It showed that a diversion would be in place during those times, and I am intrigued as to where we might be redirected.

Delving into the much maligned council website there is a comprehensive guide to forthcoming roadworks planned by both itself and its 'arms-length' subsidiary and contractor. The lists do mention some surfacing work and drainage maintenance on Stone Chair Lane but nothing about road closures. Later, at our Lifeboat Operations meeting, someone said that they had it on good authority that the communications company for the area had planned work. Surely, even they must advise the much maligned council but perhaps the much maligned council does not have a list of other people's work we can see.

I was contacted earlier in the day by Prof who is down here on here break from Proffing or whatever it is Profs do. She asked if we might meet up in the middle of the afternoon for coffee, which of course is ridiculous because everyone knows that the middle of the afternoon is tea. However, she has lived and worked for many year somewhere north of Camborne and I have heard that they have strange and unsavoury habits there, so perhaps that was it. I readily agreed, apart from the coffee bit, as Prof is remarkably easy company. She arrived just as the Missus and Mother came back from shopping and we all spent nigh on a couple of hours of convivial chat.

Outside, it had become dark and the rain had set in for a short while, so I drove Prof home at the top of the hill. She is heading back home at the end of the week, so it was delightful that she came for tea before she went. She can return home safe in the knowledge that her next request for coffee in the afternoon would not be frowned upon – probably.

I attended the Lifeboat Operations meeting after tea, that will be the one with jam and bread, where the road closure formed part of the discussion. One of our number was tasked with discovering the facts from the much maligned council, with which we all wished him the very best of luck, so I might possibly have a better clue tomorrow for you, dear reader, or probably not.

January 9<sup>th</sup> – Monday

A couple of times during the night I awoke with the sound of heavy rain lashing on the roof. I had not bothered to look at a forecast for the morning to see if the bleddy hound and I needed some cover – well, if I needed some cover; she is more stalwart than I, or rather she has little choice. As it happened, I had forgotten all about the rain when we stepped out into the damp street. I had also forgotten to turn on the outside lights had had to run back inside so that we could see what we were doing. We were not long back inside when the heavens opened in a tremendous downpour with added wind for effect.

My luck held out for my trip to the gymnasium, but I was blown down the road by the force of the wind. I had also noticed that it appeared much colder this morning than it had even yesterday when they warned us that we would see a dip. I was not entirely sure how much of a blistering session I could arrange with every sinew taut against the immoderate temperature. I did an extra warm up on the exercise bicycle, which helped but did not compensate by dropping any other part of my circuit. I was more thoroughly exercised than usual by the end of it, which included fighting my way back home against the breeze. I was ready to throw in the towel at the end of it, which is just as well I had one with me.

We had no particular plans for today. The weather has scotched most work that we could be doing at The Farm and we are also not to risk another episode with the bleddy hound who caught a chill up there last time. I am increasingly concerned that we are getting behind up there but in the foremost of my mind is the wood for the raised beds that I left out in the open. The intention was, of course, to use it more quickly than we had until things got in the way. It is treated wood but even so it will need to be dried out for a week before I can use it. I was therefore anxious that we, or at least one of us, should get up there sooner rather than later.

A trip to the post office had also become necessary. I have an imaging drum in the shop that was purchased for a laser printer that we no longer have. I tried to sell it before but had mis-represented it as a toner cartridge and removed it. It has sat idle for several months in the shop, so I thought I would try it again as it was a costly item new. I put it up on an Internet auction site in the middle of the week, which came due on Sunday in the middle of the day. I had checked it on Saturday night, and it had disappointingly only attracted one bid of £5, which was my opening offer. As with the way of these things there must have been much activity around it closing in on the sale deadline and in the end we realised nearly as much as I paid for it. It needed sending today. Heartened by this success I will try the other items we need to get rid of that hold some potential residual value.

I was detained at the post office first, by an unusually long queue and secondly, by conversation with the lady behind the counter to discuss business and the prospects for the new year. Eventually, the bleddy hound and I tore ourselves away to head up to The Farm.

Since I had to go anyway, I thought that I would take one of the Christmas trees up with me, so I picked the largest to get that out of the way first. I had wanted to put it in nose first as it would be easier to extract up at The Farm but there was no way it was going to allow me to do that so it had to go in trunk first with the top quarter sticking out of the back. The struggle would come extracting it but first we needed to get up our lane that was blocked by a large lump of rock fallen out of the hedge.

The previous incumbent of the caravan park there regularly it fires against the other side of the hedge along that stretch which had irreparably damaged it. Parts of the hedge had crumbled out of that area before but none so big as this one, which had been dislodged by the recent rain eroding the soil from around it. The flora that binds the hedges together has still not fully recovered from the burning. I have been able to lift previous rock falls out of the way but this was too heavy and since it had fallen from a mid hedge position, there was no hole to roll it back into. I had to roll it up the lane a ways to find a convenient niche to roll it into. I think we may have to get a hedge builder in to repair some of that section because the gap left by the fallen rock has left it precarious.

It was no the last of my trials, either. The Christmas tree, poked into the back of the truck had gone in with the branches. It now had to come out with the branches splayed and clinging on to every ledge and obstruction in the space. No only did this make it a struggle to extract, the process had the effect of stripping every branch and frond of its lose needles, which were legion. The rear of the truck is now needle city but on the plus side it does smell rather pleasant and almost masks the lingering odour of spilt petrol and oil.

While we were there and much to the bleddy hound's chagrin – she much dislikes being at The Farm – I stopped to move most of the timber into the polytunnel. It should dry out nicely in there I hope, unless the humidity gets to it but given that is where it will end up when the raised beds are finished, that is probably a good thing.

The uncut wood is not light, so I was grateful to finish and come away. It was in the middle of the afternoon by the time I got back home with the wind diminishing in ferocity all the while. The sea state too is calming a little but you would still not wish to be out in it just yet. I was quite amazed but relieved to see a cold water swimmer emerge from the direction of the Harbour yesterday when it would have still been inadvisable to go anywhere near it.

I had intended to do not very much for the rest of the afternoon but became embroiled in the stock take and ordering cycle. A call then came in from our accountant to tell me, quite casually, that the large profit warning they had given me at the outset of last year that had forced me to ferret away funds to cover the expected tax hike, was the result of an administrative error. The Making Tax Difficult computer system had not brought across my bank records that had created the illusion we had made more than we had. Given that it was our accountant who

selected the system and had taken the best part of a year to identify the error, I am more inclined to blame the accountant than the software to be frank.

While we have made roughly half the profit we were warned about, which is perhaps disappointing (but not very) it is mitigated by the prospect of a much lower tax payment. In the mean while we have unnecessary taxable funds set aside to pay the expected tax that will now increase the tax next year. Most of it is fixable as I have time to reverse some of it but I am less than delighted with our accountant who sprang this on us with two weeks to go before the relevant tax is due.

I shall put some effort into serious relaxing tomorrow, instead.

January 8<sup>th</sup> – Sunday

I used to have to cram all my getting ready to go to the range into a short time in the mornings. Thanks to the bloody hound's early morning routine, I have time to take it easy, have a cup of tea and settle into the normal morning routine. There is a danger to this, though. It is far too easy to relax to the stage that I suddenly realise the time has run out and I have to scurry about getting my tea into flasks and my dinner packed. All else is readied the night before.

There was a message in my inbox to tell me that the bullet heads that I had ordered, 1,000 .44 calibre, were ready for collection. This coincided nicely with it being shotgun day, which required me to carry the heaviest guns that I possess and the heaviest ammunition and quite a bit of it, too. I did not relish the thought of having to carry both guns, the remains of the ammunition and all my other equipment to the truck at the end of the day as well as several kilos of lead. Quite how the heroes in the movies manage to trek miles over rough terrain, fight off deadly challenges and eventually arrive at the target location fresh enough to wage a small one man war against the baddies, I do not know. I suppose they would not be heroes else.

As it was, I was the first one at the range, followed on shortly after by the man with the ammunition. I was able to transfer it from the back of his car to the back of the truck without having to carry anything else. I just calculated the weight to 15 kilos plus the cardboard packaging, which you try very hard not to get wet.

It was a good day at the range knocking over steel plates in the morning and breaking clay pigeons – mostly by them crashing into the rocky slopes of the old quarry because we missed them. It rained all morning, which was not quite so good but at least the afternoon held some sunny spells, although it was windy throughout that played havoc with the flight of the clays in the afternoon.

As the Missus drove me home she told me of some excitement down in The Cove while I was gone. The air ambulance landed down the OS end and a land ambulance was there too, so it must have been important as they are rare beasts down here. The police were having a geek down on the beach, apparently, which

may or may not have been connected with it. I have no idea what that was all about, so I shall keep one ear to the ground, probably just hearing the wind whistling in the other ear 'ole. No doubt the intrepid reporters on 'Cornwall Live' the Cornishman's online portal will come up with the story and then sometime later we will discover what actually happened. We just hope that no one was seriously hurt or ill.

For some reason, I did not find my cleaning and putting away routine as onerous as I usually do. It was all done and dusted in reasonably quick time.

With my extended time in the morning I had managed to finish the first cut of the early bird order for our supplier. Looking at the total I had concluded that we had been a bit enthusiastic with the ordering and it needed to be pared down considerably. Having run out of time in the morning, I spent the evening – again – reworking the order into something more reasonable. It will be checked again first thing and then sent off. Hopefully, that will be the end of the night shifts for a while.

January 7<sup>th</sup> – Saturday

We had been told to expect our washing machine man today but again, no time specified. It would mean one of us staying in at least until he arrived. I got up early, so that I could stay in as long as possible, which turned out as not such a bad idea, particularly later in the morning.

The heavy rain of the night had passed by the time we got out for a quick ramble along the street. Perhaps it was more of a shamle because we were all over the place and not for very long. Not only was it not raining but the day, when it eventually arrived was reasonable and bright. In amongst the brightness, dark clouds were stalking and occasionally dropping a little rain. You might have been forgiven for assuming that was the worst that was to be thrown at us and gone out in it. It would have been something of a mistake because at the tail end of the morning a bleak and dark weather front came across us. The visibility dropped to next to nothing and heavy waves of rain smoked through The Cove propelled by some serious wind behind it.

It did nothing to improve the sea's mood and by the later end of the afternoon and high water, the bay was mostly white water, the Harbour wall was buried under the weight of almost continuous waves and a great rolling sea charged in towards the beach. This was not the weather for surfing; it was not the sea to be anywhere near and it was probably not even the sea to be standing where the couple were taking photographs on the Harbour slipway. The exact place was swept by robust waves not ten minutes later. It was a sea not to be trifled with.

The washing machine man arrived in the middle of the day with the new hose and plenty of tools. When I had looked at the offending article while applying the gaffer tape I had considered that I might have been able to do the job myself. After all, it was a hose held on by two spring clips. I am glad I did not now. The spring clip for

the small end was only accessible from the top of the machine that involved unscrewing the top, the top fascia and the front of the machine. There were hoses and microswitches to move out of the way and the process was a whole lot more complex than first met the eye. The worst bit was the cursed spring clips that even our man struggled with. We now have a working machine without the aid of sticky tape.

The Missus headed off to The Farm again to finish off the stock count. I was pretty desperate to have the final figures as we are now into borrowed time to place the order and gain the show discount. While she was gone, I had a go at fixing the Christmas lights that had inexplicably sheared three wires, very neatly all in the same place without the aid of intervention. One of the wires runs from first to last light and was easy to partner up. The other two were guess work but with a 50 percent likelihood of success, I chose the right coupling straight away. The soldering was happily straight forward after that once I had worked out how to refill my gas soldering iron and the lights work again, good as new.

The Missus did not return with the numbers under after half past four o'clock. The brightness of the morning had stuttered a bit in the afternoon but had hung around to make the angry sea look pretty in parts as it danced and charged with abandon across the whole of the bay. That brightness was slowly replaced by a damp and cold glowering with more rain moving in from the west.

It was therefore not the warmest or the most inspiring to sit at the computer for the rest of the evening inputting numbers. After all the inputting came the more difficult task of selecting the items for the early bird order. I was mindful of last Easter that we had relied upon as usual to fund the first orders of the year. Easter did not happen, and not even the extended weekend yielded much in the way of trade. It had put me in mind of communities of old when the harvest failed and left them in dire straits. It was extremely tricky digging ourselves out of that one. Any orders we place this year will be carefully considered.

Just when I thought that I had finished – well, finished selection, I still need to formulate the order – and had settled on the more comfortable sofa, I recalled some additions. Right at the end of our tour of the supplier's show, I had taken some photographs of addition items the salesman had recommended. I will need to seek those out tomorrow when I return from the range. There is something to look forward to.

Since there was not much left of the evening, I decided to do better all. It was very pleasant for once.

January 6<sup>th</sup> – Friday

With tonight being the twelfth night – depending on your belief system – we made plans to take down the decorations across the road including the memory tree that

has run out of votives, or labels as you wish, anyway. We might have done it yesterday to hedge our bets but we were busy doing other stuff, so we elected to believe that tonight is the twelfth night – this year, anyway.

And just before I move on, what is going on with that word, twelfth? I mean, where did that 'f' come from as it does not happen with any other 'th'. I looked it up and wished that I had not because it went banging on about allophones, which I also had to look up, which then told me that was a phoneme, which ... took me down a rabbit hole so deep I met Alice coming back. We can blame an old Norse, apparently, which reminds me of a very long joke that I will not trouble you with, dear reader.

Needless to say, I was up way before any self-respecting lark and before a good few who do not give a care. It at least gives me a full day of doing stuff rather than lying in bed languishing and wondering where all the time goes. I still wonder where the time goes, but I am safe in the knowledge that I have given it my best shot, sort of if you do not count the procrastination. It was not quite so black out there this morning because I turned the courtesy light on outside the Lifeboat station and no one remembered to turn it off again.

I made it to the gymnasium again making it a full house this week, the first for a little while. It was chilly enough but the drop in temperature the weatherman on the television spoke of is not due until the weekend, so I considered myself lucky. Once I had got going it did not matter anyway as I warmed up pretty swiftly during quite a blistering session. I enjoyed it even more since I had equipped the hut with a tin roof with a dustpan, brush and broom. While I was rowing, I was no longer gazing up at the dangling cobwebs and the little pile of sand under the stirrups on the rowing machine since I gave the place the once over on Wednesday. It is only fair since I am probably the chief, and sometimes I feel only, user of the place – particularly during the winter.

I got straight into decoration removal as soon as I had returned home and finished off my breakfast. I dared not touch the main tree as that is the Missus' domain and woe betide that I remove a single string of tinsel lest I do it wrong or put it in the wrong place. Instead, I started on the memory tree, removing the votives or labels one at a time.

To begin with I was reading each of the messages and memories left by a wide cross section of the visitors and locals alike. I very quickly decided that I would stop reading the messages as they were incredibly touching. Some were quite simple and most referred to Grandads and Nannies with others to parents no longer with us. A few were longer, recalling time spent with loved ones on the beach, on holiday and adventures. The turning point was when I came across one that related to lost children, at which juncture I decided to concentrate on the job of respectfully removing them from the tree.



The Missus had chosen to thread fishing line through one corner of the label and this had proven very effective at holding those labels onto the tree. Once the needles had sprung back, the line was trapped where it was and the several mighty winds that the tree enjoyed, some scating it sideways on its moorings failed to dislodge most of them. I fancy that the few we had to collect from the other side of the fence had not been fully secured in the first place. It was truly a labour of love removing the labels and setting them aside and for some I had to snick the frond that it was hanging on as well. All the messages will be burnt and the organic remains will be scattered by the Lifeboat when it can next get out on training.

The dismemberment of the trees took the last bit of the morning and most of the afternoon. I had started as early as I could not so much because I suspected it would take a long time, which it did, but rather that the weather forecast had suggested rain, some of it heavy, gracing all of the afternoon and into the evening. I was almost of a mind to discount the forecast entirely because the morning had been so very pleasant and bright and that when I looked at the rain radar there was nothing but a few isolated and light showers. It was still looking that way when I went to collect Mother from St Buryan a little way into the afternoon. By the time I got there the place was enclosed in low cloud and mizzle which I attributed to the altitude – it is just short of 25 metres higher than Sennen Village. However, when we retraced my earlier journey, the low cloud had descended along the whole of it and we only dipped into clarity when we descended Cove Hill into The Cove.

Here, the rain had set in good and proper. The bleddy hound, who I had whisked off from watching the Missus dissemble the tree to come with me, was not best pleased at being taken off for a walk when we got back and she grudgingly went as far as the Lifeboat station before insisting we came back. She did the same later when we had finished both the trees and I took her out, in the dry by then, one more time.

We had endured various heaviness of rain coming down during our efforts. I had slipped into something more waterproof when I returned with Mother, so was not entirely bothered by it but we could have well done without it. I had asked the Missus to separate out the two sets of lights on the tree that we knew to be connected to duff battery packs, which she duly did. She then brought me the third, and last night working set, that had mysteriously been sliced in half, which was nothing at all to do with the Missus using a craft knife to cut the cable ties holding the lights to the tree – not a thing, came nowhere near it, m'lud. I am now quite adept at soldering cable ends together, so hopefully this will not be too much of a problem.

The trees are now bundled into a corner by the Lifeboat station against expected high winds in the next few days. They are southwesterly anyway until Sunday night, so should not cause us too much of a problem. They will be the first victims of our new tree shredder once I have assembled it and worked out what oil to put in it. I may also have to go and acquire some petrol as the stuff we have is a bit old, I fear.

I devoted the last few hours of time in the day, before I felt I was due a sit down with a beer, to inputting the figures the Missus brought back from The Farm. I can understand, dear reader, why you keep coming back time and again; our lives and tales of derring do are riveting are they not.

Alright, alright. I have heard the increasing clamour to tell the joke I alluded to earlier. We will all possibly regret it, but I cannot go against popular demand.

An old and very short-sighted Norwegian moves to Cornwall blessed with a heap of money he has accumulated over his lengthy years in business. He wants a house built to his very specific requirements down on the Helford River because, because the little he can see reminds him of his home in the fjords. He commissions a local builder of some repute (who does not do a runner before the job even starts) and apart from the detailed specifications, required the job to be complete by his birthday, which this year falls on a bank holiday. There is a sizeable bonus for the builder if he completes on time and penalties accruing if he does not, the former outweighing the risk of the latter in the builder's mind.

By and by the work commences and proceeds at pace. There are one or two set backs mainly due on waiting for custom made items to be wrought and other components that need to be shipped from afar. These conspire to push the project timescales to the limit and the builder to have concerns about a timely delivery but he works hard to reign in the deficit.

Eventually, everything has arrived, the house is built and the site cleared in time for the arrival of the old Norwegian. It is late on the Saturday before the old man's birthday the following Monday and the builder takes one last look around the house checking that everything is perfect. He ends up in the kitchen and there, to his horror, he discovers that where the kitchen sink should be, the kitchen fitters have left a gaping void.

The builder calls the kitchen fitter who is out on the tear with his pals and has left his work telephone turned off for the evening. No suppliers are open until at least the Tuesday morning and the builder is fearing for the loss of his attractive bonus for timely completion. In his desperation, he calls his foreman who come out to the aid of his boss, even if it is only moral support he can offer.

On his way up the drive to the house the foreman spots a bricklayer's hod, discarded in the shrubs and missed in the site clearance. He picks it up and takes it with him when he enters the house to meet his distraught paymaster. Being a resourceful soul, he strikes upon an idea that brightens the bosses face. The brickie's hod is vaguely sink shaped, so why not temporarily fit the brickie's hod in where the sink should be and plumb it in. The old man is so short-sighted he probably will not notice. The boss is doubtful but in desperation agrees to the plan and the pair of them fit the hod in place and plumb it in.

Monday arrives and the builder is showing the Norwegian around his new house and all the clever features therein. He leaves the kitchen until last in a cold sweat fearing the worst, but the old man seems happy enough and signs off on the builder's bonus. It just goes to prove that a hod's as good as a sink to a blind Norse.

Ay thang yew. I shall go get my coat.

January 5<sup>th</sup> – Thursday

Since she had been a brae bit poorly yesterday, I got up with the bleddy hound only to discover that she was as right as ninepence. I was thankful that she left it to a reasonable hour to get up.

The Missus had managed some of the stock room before we had to leave The Farm so I took advantage of my early rising and input what she had done so far. I still will not be able to place our order until it is complete and I must hope that the supplier gives us a little leeway.

The day was another grey one when it arrived and we could see it. There were some blue patches up there later but they seemed to make little impact on the greyness. I had allowed myself a little hope that we might squeeze in a Lifeboat exercise in later in the day but by later in the afternoon, the swell had increased, throwing itself over the wall at mid-tide and pounding the cliffs as it approached high water. It was a powerful ground sea rolling in with big ponderous waves, enough to tempt our one of the local boys for a bit of a surf. Even if it had been a little quieter, the tides were not conducive to a safe recovery, so that was the end of that.

Back at home, one of us had to wait in for the arrival of the washing machine man, so I took myself up to The Farm to finish off installing the voltage regulator for the CCTV camera. All that was left was to shrink the rubber covers over the exposed wires to stop them shorting and I was done inside a few minutes. I then came back so that the Missus could go up there. It was after she had gone that the washing machine man called to say he was poorly and not coming. He would be with us as soon as he could. At least he called.

The Missus went up around the middle of the day and stayed until late afternoon. The job has still not been completed but, of course, we have much more stock than we did at this time last year. That was the year we could not get any stock and we had to sell homemade pegs and sprigs of heather to get by. We over-compensated this year by purchasing far too much but at least we will not have to spend out as much restocking for this year. It just takes twice as long to count it.

The Missus came back cold and tired but was ambivalent about the washing machine not being fixed. The gaffer and insulating tape we put in place has held up remarkably well and the machine has had some use over the last week, so there is a

good news story for once and a cracking advertisement for the tape, too. She came back with a sheaf of paper, the count so far that I can work on in the morning.

With no launch in the evening we consoled ourselves with making sure that the station doors still opened after such a long period of inaction and that the winch still started on command. Assured that everything was tickety boo, we retired for the evening on the shore side while Boat Crew have a few more options to practise things with the boat on dry land.

I must leave you with some potentially good news for those avidly following our building works soap opera serial. We know one or two builders locally who we would have gladly used had they been available three years ago when all this kicked off but we would have had to wait at least two years for them to be free of their obligations. Clearly, if we knew then what we know today, we would have waited. As it is, one of them has agreed to do the work. It is early days, so we are cautious to be too excited, but it is a step in the right direction we hope.

January 4<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday

There was a much better day in prospect, although it struggled to brighten above a light grey all day. I decided to wait to go down to the gymnasium until it had lightened a little more from the dusk type light we had first thing. I did not get there before nine o'clock which is only a small delay but added to further procrastination and boggling about later which got rid of half the day before we got going.

I had hoped to get the stock take at The Farm finished. The missus knocked it off in record time last year, so I was hoping for something of the same this time around. I was to be disappointed, and it was largely my fault. As I headed to the gymnasium and yet another blistering session, I had in mind something small and healthy for breakfast when I returned.

When I did get back and ended my getting readiness, in the kitchen there was some of our organic white loaf left, the ones we bake from frozen, from our tea last night. It was just lying there screaming for bacon which we have in abundance in the freezer downstairs. I compounded my error by asking the Missus if she wanted a bacon sandwich and that was very much that. Due to the volumes of bacon involved, it takes two sessions in the grill, so we had our sandwiches sequentially when I had really hoped for something more concurrent.

It did not help one iota that just as I put my plate down in front of me a lorry turned up with our tree shredder that we had ordered. I suppose if I were to look from the alternative angle, we might have missed the delivery had we been a little more efficient in getting ready. As it was, I could not help thinking of the time to do work ebbing away rapidly.

The tree shredder, being of a size and weight incompatible with the truck's luggage space, I had to dash up to The Farm to retrieve our trailer. On the way up, had anyone else been in the truck, I would have remarked on the number of vehicles parked on the blind bend by the OS and also the labourers' vans parked on the way up the hill. It was gratifying to note on the way back down that a number of those vehicles had little yellow packages attached to their windscreens and a chap with dayglo straps on his uniform taking numbers. I did wonder what would happen when I parked outside the shop to load up for The Farm, but he only gave a cheery wave as he passed us by.

It was late by the time we got to The Farm and we were not, with a best will in the world, likely to complete the stock take or would I finish the tasks I set for myself. The first of these was to wire in the voltage regulator to the CCTV camera circuit to try and resolve the problem of it shutting itself down randomly. I would have completed this much more quickly had I remembered to bring the solder with me along with the soldering iron. I managed to connect the wires but ran out of time to shrink the insulation back over the joins.

We have some pretty good portable flood lighting to go along with the battery lighting in the store room but we know we are fighting a losing battle when the light starts to go outside. It takes a few minutes to pack everything up, so at around half past three we called it a day and headed for home. The washing machine man called last night to say he would be with us tomorrow but could not say what time. He is running around trying to fit in the backlog of requests, so we are not going to be fussy about timing. It does mean one of us potentially staying in all day tomorrow, which will slow us up a bit.

On top of all that, the late and large breakfast rather put us off our tea and we settled for a snack. It also looks like the cold and damp of The Farm today gave the bleddy hound a chill, unless she is putting it on to teach us a lesson. She hates going to The Farm with a vengeance and I this could be the vengeance. We dosed her with paracetamol and hope it will pass by morning. I shall think twice before interfering with the natural run of things again, rest assured.

January 3<sup>rd</sup> – Tuesday

Well, this could be short and probably not so sweet. We spent most of the day with our visitors from North Devon, which is north of Camborne and a bit to the right. This did not leave a great deal of wriggle room for setting the world alight but was a pleasant enough interlude from our normal run of things.

The bleddy hound and I escaped getting wet on our first trip out but had our comeuppance later when we ventured out in the middle of the day. The rain kicked in around the mid morning time and stayed with us in varying degrees of heavy throughout the day. It had gone away by the time we went out again at the end of the afternoon but the wind that has set in early, had increased bit by bit through the day

and made me thankful that I had wasted no time in tying up our wheelie bin the second the bin men had disappeared around the corner.

Before our visitors arrived, family of the Missus, we scurried around clearing the remaining boxes from our clearing out process of yesterday. There was one box left that the Missus sorted through while our guests were here. It resembled some sort of entertainment, wondering at each new item unwrapped from West London local newspaper from early in the new millennium that showed the kind of house prices we now find laughably cheap. There was much guessing as to the price we might garner from some of the items if sold on the Internet and a little guessing as to what some of the items actually were.

The Missus raised the topic of a doll she had discovered yesterday that has been a gift from a visit to a clown convention in Bognor Regis when she was a child. It sounds like they must have had a bit of a laugh until the car fell apart on the way home. There were a few items that evoked such memories amongst those souvenirs, which made them very hard to throw away.

It was into the evening and after tea that our visitors retired and the Missus took Mother home who had been much surprised by the visit. The rain would have pretty much scuppered any other plans we might have had, so the timing could not have been better. We still need to play catch up tomorrow.

January 2<sup>nd</sup> – Monday

Well, so much for closing the shop and having a bit of a lie in for once. The bleddy hound was having none of it and had me out of bed at the same time as usual. I did tell her last night that the shop was not opening; I must assume she was ignoring me.

It did not matter too much as I had intended to get a march on the day and to clear out the garage that we had filled ahead of our work starting. It did not quite work out like that, but it was worth a try. Before all that it was time to head to the gymnasium.

I had not been for two weeks, which I think is the longest absence since I started going several years ago. Had I bothered to index the Diaries as I went along, I could probably have told you exactly how long it has been. Never mind, it has been a long while. Having a week off I have found is a decent rest and on resumption I my blistering session is probably more blistering than normal, achieving record times on the rowing machine. Two weeks is a tad long I discovered, and I was a little rusty; the last 1,000 metres of rowing was something of a challenge, I do not mind saying. It was still a blistering session.

Having got the gymnasium out of the way I needed to head into town to collect some more storage boxes. We concluded that all the loose and raggedly boxed detritus in the loft would be much easier to ship out next time by having it appropriately stuffed

into boxes. For the items already in boxes and being collected from the garage, we would spend some time sorting and be ruthless in getting rid of things we really could do without. Arguably, since it had nestled in the loft for multiple years at a time, the vast majority was stuff we could do without. Sorting it would really test our mettle.

The Missus had got ahead of me by the time I returned. I had been unable to get hold of her while I was at the shop as I had forgotten to make a note of the box size I was after. I asked the very pleasant lady at the customer service desk if the boxes that I thought were the correct ones were the same as the ones I had purchased before Christmas and I told her the then purchase price. She assured me that they were indeed the same and I noted that they were now on special offer at half the price. It was not until I got home that I realised I had been duped because the new ones as well as half the price are also half the size. No matter, at least we cannot make these too heavy to carry.

The sorting took a good deal longer than I anticipated and occasionally our ruthlessness was a tad more ruth than less. Nevertheless, we ended this attempt with four empty containers that we did not start with and a pile of stuff to go to a charity shop and some more that might find its way onto an Internet market place. There was, disappointingly, rather fewer items going to the tip, sorry, household waste recycling centre than I would like but there again we felt that many of the items we had weeded out still had some residual value such as what was left of my vinyl record collection.

I had spent some time on the Internet in the morning ahead of this task as I believe that some of these records might be worth a few bob. I did not think that I have any rarities, apart from maybe a second issue copy of Please, Please Me by the Beatles but even that is probably only worth £30 to £40 if its quality passes muster and it really is a second issue. Here I found a real problem. It is not very easy to determine the release issue of any particular record although there are websites that attempt to provide some useful information. I found it baffling and will have to tread carefully as I neither wish to hoodwink anyone unintentionally nor do I wish to be hoodwinked.

Amongst all of the strange and curious objects we have collected over the year there was some old technology salted away. I once needed to store quite a bit of data – it was quite a bit in its day – and had purchased something called a JazDrive, which was a high volume (then) backup tape device with high density removable disks, a whole 1 gigabyte – this was Star Trek stuff at the time, just 20 years ago. I have the drive and the disks and am now wondering should it really just end up in a skip or is it a museum piece. I might spend a little time researching and see what pops up.

I also discovered a huge heap of CD music discs which really are not worth the bother of putting on the Internet for sale. We concluded that we might offer them up for sale in the shop with the proceeds going to our counter collection like we do with second hand books. Rather irritatingly, I noticed a few discs that I had recently repurchased because I thought I had the previous version only on vinyl. However,

there were also some that I will transfer into digital format so that they may edify my ears on my next blistering session at the gymnasium.

We missed our target of clearing out the garage in a day by a mile; it will take a week at this rate and we have visitors tomorrow and a stock take to complete. Time will either have to pass more slowly or we will have to work twice as quickly.

January 1<sup>st</sup> – Sunday

Everything looked and felt pretty much the same when we looked out first thing this morning. All this sparking new year type stuff does not seem to have made a blind bit of difference. What a swizz.

I rechecked the numbers of pasties we had available for the day when I first went down to the shop and concluded another eight would be a safe bet. I baked these from the freezer stock. They took a good bashing during the busy time from the middle of the day through to close of play. We had two left when I closed the doors and cleared out all the milk with just forty minutes to go, which is pretty close to precision stocking, if you do not mind me blowing my own piccolo.

We seemed to be a little bit busier than we had been the previous day and this proved to be true at the end of day check. This was to be expected since there was just one light, and happily short, shower of rain in the middle of the day and some more pushing in toward the end of our opening. There were many more families abroad, too, rather than just the adults who presumably drew the short straw to pick up essential goods yesterday. I am sure there will be a few around tomorrow as well but in general, I think that it will peter out quite rapidly.

There was enough time in between customers to input the rest of the list of stock that I had accumulated through the day yesterday. This was quite satisfying and means that the shop is all done and wrapped up apart from the hooded sweatshirts and since they do not have a bearing on reordering just yet, I am not too concerned.

We are quite a cosmopolitan destination, but this mainly manifests during the main part of the season and the run up to it. I did not expect to see groups of foreign people about but today we were entertained by a couple of German families and a French group of young people. The latter are clearly staying in a holiday let locally as they purchased logs and provisions. I was also pleased to point out that the pate they purchased was French, which I am sure impressed them greatly unless they realised they could probably have purchased it at home for a third the cost. I was glad to make them feel at home, at least.

However much I enjoyed this week, it was still good to close the door on the year even if it was at the start of the new one.



