

DIARY 2021/22

June 30th – Wednesday

Well, that is what a proper rip gribbler looks like. I quite enjoyed a little frolic on the Harbour beach with the bleddy hound and her best pal. It was glorious down there and for the first time in a while I was not too pressed for time. That is always a mistake, of course, because before you know it you are pressed for time and could have benefited from not dawdling earlier.

The morning went off like a rocket. It was even busier when I came back from a blistering session at the gymnasium later in the morning. It was a typical rip gribbler profile to the day, fat at either end and thin in the middle. Even then I was able to clear a fair bit of the remaining deliveries in the store room and the Missus finished the job while I was gone.

Talking of the circus – well, we were yesterday and I am desperate for a link – our regular sword swallower appeared today having been enticed to The Cove by the Missus. It was actually Zoltan who is a knife sharpener but clearly missed his calling. The Missus collected all of her garden tools and Mother's as well and I added our kitchen knives and my filleting knives for good measure. Zoltan was here for a good couple of hours, grinding away.

The afternoon blossomed into something spectacular, or perhaps it had already been that way. There were acres of beach for the revellers to revel on and not a wave to be seen for miles. There were a few surf boards out there but the place to be was on a paddle board if you fancied a bit of a cruise. Some did and I spotted a couple way out past Aire Point when I had a quick peek in the later afternoon. I would say you probably needed some good sun factor cream on out there which the rays bouncing all around.

The Missus brought down some more of her lettuce leaves yesterday and sorted them into mixed bags. These disappear very quickly and to the detriment of the iceberg lettuce we normally keep. We had to throw two away and I will not be reordering while we still have our own.

Also in the truck when she came back were the frames from the original hive. After such a long time it was a disappointing yield, and the Missus thinks that something was amiss, possibly the replacement of a queen in the wrong place in the hive. She has refreshed all the frames and given the hive a spring clean in the hope that will do the trick. The second hive is now complete and occupied, so fingers crossed that we will be able to catch up with demand just a month or two later than planned.

The other thing in the truck when it returned from The Farm was Mother. I had to ask whether it had suddenly become Friday – her regular day – without me noticing. Of course she is welcome any day (there are snitches in the family that report back

relevant Diary details, you understand) but it threw me for a moment or two. We all sat at the table for tea and studied the bay. There were still quite a few people down on the beach and the shallows were dotted with swimsuited dippers. Out on the Harbour wall the daring youth jumped and splashed. It was a proper show of summer glee down at the seaside and a joy to observe.

The Missus was spotting flocks of birds out in the bay that were invisible to me, she must have some sharp eyes. I did notice a lone gull bobbing around fairly close in. I thought it was a black headed gull but on closer inspection the head was completely black. Consulting the Internet I announced it to be a very rare Bonaparte's Gull and dropped a note to the Harbour Master. He asked if I might have mistaken it for a Little Gull and on scrutiny of the Internet again, the two look very similar. I conceded that it was far more likely to be a Little Gull and I should be my twitcher aspirations back in their box again – probably where they should stay.

I cannot wait for the morning when I shall go seeking out sparrows to identify.

June 29th – Tuesday

There was rain again when I woke up but fortunately it had stopped by the time I went down to the shop. I do not think that the bleddy hound would have found three wet days in a row terribly amusing.

It was still pretty dour for a good part of the morning but brightened up later in the day while remaining cloudy. It certainly did not deter our visitors and we were relatively busy, although it took them a few hours to get going. It was the third day in a row that I have eaten my breakfast undisturbed, though yesterday does not count as I have breakfast before I return to the shop after the gymnasium.

The day is delivery day and the big grocery order arrived just shortly after we opened. Prior to this we had the green grocery come in, then the newspapers. After the main grocery arrival, the bakery delivery came then after that the second grocery delivery. In and around these a box arrived from our local interest book people and the post office brought a parcel addressed to us but a person I had never heard of. We do have visitors collect parcels from us but usually we have a heads up first. I thought that someone had told the Missus, maybe, but she denied all knowledge, too. It will wait until it is asked for.

I had to wait until later to ask the Missus as she was not around to ask from quite early on. She had found someone selling an IBC down in Helston and went off to collect it having picked up the trailer from The Farm first. I have estimated that a further four will be required to complete what is currently an outline plan for water management. The one she has collected will go next to the first which is fed from the cabin roof. The next issue we have is connecting them so that one overflows into the other. This is not something that has been designed in and requires screwing in a

threaded hose connector but I am struggling to find the right one and a big enough hose to do the connecting.

I spent some time last night seeing what was available. There are specific links on the Internet that bring up companies when searching for tank to tank connectors. The problem has been so far that all the threaded connectors have back nuts that you tighten up from the inside. We cannot get inside the IBC unless we cut a hole above the connection, which seems a bit counter productive. I think that the threaded ends would probably screw into the correct size hole in the IBC but I am not sure. More research is required.

Everything went a bit quiet after about four o'clock. There was lots of beer and snack buying rolling up to that point. I can only imagine that there must be a good movie on television but it seems an odd time for it.

There was another attraction. The circus was in town and up behind the school at the top. The Lifeboat crew had a message about it, but I did not know if it was a specific invitation or just an informative notice. It is an aerial circus with performers doing whatever they do suspended from a crane, not so much big top as big drop. I did not meet anyone who went to see it so I cannot pass judgement or report on the acts. I do not know even if it was a public show but I believe it was for one day only, so if you missed it - too late.

Talking of entertaining children, we seem to have a proliferation of grandparents with very small children with us this week. It is probably a selfless thing to give the parents a break for a week and give the grandparents some bonding time whether they want it or not. The children seem to be enjoying it too and no surprise there. All the ones I have seen coming into the shop with, mainly, the grandmother are treated to toys, sweets and whatnot. I can sense that the children must think it is nana from heaven.

Aye thang yew. I'm here all week ... getting my coat now.

June 28th – Monday

I managed to get to the gymnasium unscathed but it was another wet morning for the bleddy hound, I am afraid, and full metal jacket waterproofs for me.

At least this morning I did not get a face full, but I could hear it hammering on the roof lights. Yesterday the sound was different in the front of the building and sounded more like being in a car wash. Our windows are sparkling clean, which is a benefit not to be sniffed at. It helped me admire the brightness of the bay after the rain went half way through the morning, although I could still see the dark clouds to the north. It must have been largely clear behind us to the south but I cannot see that bit without moving to the other side of the street.

I made the cardinal sin – you have to wonder why ‘cardinal’ sin. Are they more prone to it than the rest of us or do they just do bigger ones, I wonder – perhaps the big mistake of telling people we had an abundance of hake on the way in the middle of a spring tide. The netters do not go out spring tides because of the bigger currents and hence no netted fish. I had to cancel one of the orders I took yesterday and be cautious about Thursday’s market. Although our fish ordering is in a much better place than it was last year, it is still a bit fraught. Having lost the main bulk of the order for tomorrow I also had to cancel and smaller bits that we might have added on because the order would not have been big enough for delivery. Sadly, there will be times when people are going to have to be disappointed, but it would be helpful if I could remember the tides and rules.

With all the other excitement yesterday, I completely forgot to mention the ‘rat race’ that some evil genius had devised. I had previously heard nothing about it and only noticed the sign by the car park payment machines by chance. I thought it had said it was earmarked for next weekend but I must have misread it, although it is equally possible someone misprinted it. The race was along the Coast Path to Cape Cornwall and back, incorporating twice up and down the Gwenver steps. Had I only known I might have joined – other than the fact I did not have a pirate costume or a parrot to put on my shoulder. I could have cancelled the gymnasium for the next couple of months. In fact, I would probably *have* to cancel my gymnasium visits for the next several months after that.

It was not ideal weather for them and probably quite dangerous in places. The first ones came through early doors when the rain was heavy but had not quite got into its stride. I watched the first one come back, too. I could not tell you how long it took but from the fresh and clean look of him I could see that he had hidden behind Carn Keys for an hour. Rolling around in a bit of mud would have helped.

The good weather made rapid improvements as we moved into the afternoon. Business followed suit. The pasties that had filled the fridge to overflowing, disappeared over the course of a couple of hours. It worked out that we had just the right amount. Clearly, this was my planning all along, devised while sitting next to some chap in running gear at the back of Carn Keys, ahem.

Things were so back on track we even had a proper five minutes to closing rush. Beer and wine has taken a back seat in the poorer weather but we have sold an abundance of food stuffs, many of them local, which is very pleasing. The Missus has reported that the water container is six inches from the top after a day and a bit of rain, which is not bad going. She will be able to continue to grow even more local foodstuffs to replace the ones we sold as long as she gets there ahead of the bunnies.

By the way, I was right about our evening meals. Cheese on toast with a bit of bacon tonight. Sheer luxury; it could have been bully beef and no butter.

June 27th – Sunday

The rain arrived with us sometime in the early hours of the morning. It woke me up by landing on my face. The bleddy hound was even less pleased when she got taken out a little while later and made sure she was not out for long. The rain continued through the day in varying degrees of heavy, which was an utter delight, as you might imagine. The very best thing about it was that it came with a robust easterly or northeasterly that blew the rain into the shop. It was not very many minutes before I had to switch on the first electric sliding door in The Cove.

Naturally, we were quiet as the grave all day. It is likely that some graves are busier, I would say. The sudden cessation of customer visits allowed me time to count the hooded sweatshirts that were becoming obvious by their absence. I quite forgot that we sent a box full up to The Farm store but remember just in time before I finalised the order. There were not quite as many missing as I thought but some sizes are out completely, so a small order now should see us through the busy part of the summer.

I could have put my feet up after that but buoyed up by completing one outstanding task, I went looking for others. Our preserves and chutney have been on the too depleted list for a little while and having ignored them completely last year I am trying to make amends during this year and not run out of any of it. An order is on its way, shortly behind the order for dukkah, which is the little pots of seeds used for dipping and crusting on fish and putting in salads. It sells very well and I do try not to run out of that.

The list goes on. Crickey, I did not think I had been that productive but I managed to get ahead of the posse and get both main grocery orders done as well. The farm shop type supplier that we use to fill the gaps from the main cash and carry keeps coming up with new things. Since we are a soft touch, we like to try some of the new things and from Tuesday we will have a range of ambient pate to adorn our shelves. Sadly, there were some casualties of our 'let us try this just once' mindset. I poured six litres of soya milk down the drain, swiftly followed by five loaves of gluten free bread, although they, disappointingly, would not fit down the drain so I threw them away in the bin instead. The former was probably the casualty of pandering to customer demand for oat milk, which then seemed to usurp the soya milk.

As if I had not moved the planet forward enough for one day, our pagers went off at half past three o'clock. We can usually rely on their being two further shouts after we have had one. This was for another yacht up by Brisons adrift as it lost its rudder, which seemed a little careless. It resulted in another tow to Newlyn and another wait for the boat to return to The Cove.

Unusually, at the same time, another yacht, quite a vintage schooner, was having problems back down by Wolf Rock. Since however good we are, we cannot rescue

two boats in two different locations at the same time, Penlee were tasked to that one, followed by an even slower tow to Newlyn.

We gathered at eight o'clock to set up the short slipway for our boat's return. To keep things lively, we rotate jobs with me ending up in the nice warm winch room watching all the others do the heavy lifting in the damp, cool evening down on the slipway. Naturally, I felt a pang of guilt, although it could have been the broccoli from earlier tea, which was a quiet, simple affair with our visitors all gone home.

The boat arrived around half past eight o'clock or thereabouts and we brought it up the short slip in what looked like a textbook recovery from my eerie in the winch room. We are, after all, a very interchangeable, very excellent Shore Crew.

June 26th – Saturday

Contactless payments, now there is a thing. There is a clue in the name somehow that suggests payment may be made without any contact between the vendor and the purchaser. How is it then that quite so many people feel compelled to press, thump, rub or otherwise connect with the card machine? A gentleman yesterday found it necessary to press so hard with his card onto the top of the machine he forced it from my hand. It is contactless, for heaven's sake.

Mind, I can talk. A neighbour has asked that I witness her signature on some documents she is preparing. It asks that all the participants in the process are competent individuals. It is possible that could be called into question as we are on our third cycle of signing. The forms keep coming back because we have variously signed in the wrong place, in the wrong order or in the wrong colour pen. We have given up sending them 'special delivery' as it was getting too costly. I cannot help feeling that the process would benefit from some clear instructions in big print for us dummies.

The day started out a bit cool and breezy and developed into a day that was a bit warmer and breezy. There were geet dark clouds hangs around in variable intensity starting out with very dense and allowing some brightness to develop during the day. It was certainly lovely and warm and sunny while I was standing at the bottom of the long slip waiting for the boat to come back in.

It was around half past twelve that the pagers went off. I had a few people in the shop at the time. One party I had just served and the second party were still shopping. I apologised and led them to the door. Our guest dropped down to stand by the counter but I had left the till in use so she could not serve anyone after I had gone. I shall have to note that down.

The boat launched in under ten minutes to a yacht that was taking on water not far off Wolf Rock, so it took a little while to get there. The yacht had plenty of company, other yachts and the Gry Maritha were standing by. One of the Boat Crew

recognised the sailor as being someone famous in the yacht world. This was explained at our debrief and others in the crew nodded sagely at the mention of his name. I quietly asked the Deputy Launch Authority who he was, as I did not have a clue, and he told me 'some bloke with a yacht'. I nodded sagely, too.

The yacht was towed on to Newlyn as is often the case in such matters and berthed awaiting some inspection. I spotted our boat returning and called our crew to arms and legs and any other bits they might need. For the first time in a while for a shout recovery we had quite a few on the team and the putting out of gear was smooth and quick. The boat returned to the bay at around quarter to four and we executed what was most certainly a textbook recovery up the long slip. It was a bit of a pity that I had the times down so accurately as it was exceedingly pleasant at the bottom of the slipway with the water gently lapping at the rocks. We are, after all, a very relaxed, very excellent Shore Crew.

The Missus had covered for me while I was away. She had been busy in the kitchen earlier cooking lobsters, clams and more bleddy winkles. Even more family turned up today and they will be fed handsomely whether they like it or no. The lobsters are, of course, from the bay and the clams, er, somewhere else. No doubt it will be back to bully beef sandwiches from Monday when they have all gone home.

The early evening turned out to be quite the best part of the day. It turned quite peaceful in the shop, too, after five o'clock, the arrivals presumably not needing a five minutes to closing rush.

Many customers through the day mentioned the poor weather set for tomorrow. I had not see the forecast, so I was oblivious. At the end of the day, I took a quick look at the rainfall radar and there was a bit lump heading up from across the Channel. Most of it was heading for the middle of the Duchy and on track to miss us completely. I did not tell the Missus that as well as not being able to spend much time at The Farm for the last two days she may not get a refill for her water tanks. If the forecast is right, there will be plenty of time for that tomorrow and I will have a fridge full of pasties at the end of the day.

June 25th – Friday

There was still a bit of mizzle about when I took the bleddy hound out for a run down on the sliver of Harbour beach. I suspect tomorrow we will have to walk around the block when we hope it will not be raining. It was perfectly temperate and I really did not need the jacket I was wearing but wearing a wet, figure hugging t-shirt at that time of the morning may have been a little indiscreet. I would not wish to be responsible for swooned ladies littering the beach.

The weather picked up in the late morning but so did a fresh northwesterly, which took the edge off the temperature. It was still quite warm, though when I came out of the gymnasium or I just did not feel it after such a blistering session. I know that it is

a change over day but by that time of the morning there are usually a few more people about. When I looked down towards the shop, the street was near enough deserted.

Taking advantage of the quiet, our guests went winkle hunting. It is a London thing and ingrained in the Missus's family culture. I cannot abide the things, which to me feel like chewing rubber bands, even after they are cooked, they are not much better. The Missus, niece and Mother were welcome to tuck into their peppered winkle sandwiches. The Mister hates winkles.

Winkle picking may well have been the highlight of a rather slow day. There was a bit of coming and going and a bit of going home present buying but nothing really to set the world alight. It certainly was not hot enough to be set alight, despite what the scientists are telling us and there were several comments about a bit of a chill about the place. I would say, however, if a little sheltered spot could have been found, it was probably bleddy 'ansum.

This is what I thought about the haddock we had for tea, Mother and me. The rest of the crew had steak and scallop salad, as you do. We have sold a tremendous amount of fish this week, which has been very pleasing. Not just from the fact that we sold it but by the fact that people have come back and told us just how much they enjoyed it. It would almost be worth giving it away to give people so much enjoyment. Almost but not quite. One lady came back again today so that she could take some home with her, which is a testament to just how well it is received.

Another good food turned up at almost last thing – our small Cornish earlies. These, I think, are the rejects that the big shops and Tesmorburys turn away and that we and our regular customer hanker for. Our main man at Trevere Farm brings them down in small quantities, which is desirable as currently they are quite wet. Given we have a warm shop these are ideal conditions for turning the potatoes mouldy very quickly. We had to throw away a couple of kilograms last time. I wondered whether vacuum packing might help keep them long, so I took aside one kilo to experiment. We shall wait until all the others have gone and open the bag to see how they have done. If it works, it will be an ideal way of selling them as I can salt them away almost anywhere without them spilling out. Fingers crossed.

It was looking like there was a bit of rain around last thing. Sadly, it all looked to be to the north of us. Best not tell the Missus as she was quite excited about it.

June 24th – Thursday

There was no view from the window this morning. The mist had rolled in overnight and brought some wet with it. It was still mizzling when I stepped out but had largely dried up by the time I took the bleddy hound down to the beach. For the first time in a while she led me under the Lifeboat slips intent on something or other, which turned out to be the carcass of a pollack. A few years ago she would have been off with it,

avoiding capture. Now, it is only worth a quick sniff to assure he that it was exactly that which had led her there.

It was just misty by the time we opened up, but the street was still wet. Anyone looking out of their windows first thing would probably have decided to wait a while before venturing out. That would certainly account for the lack of people about for the first few hours of opening. By then, the mist was lifting in The Cove, but reports were that it was still thick as a bag on top. By the middle of the day most of the mist had gone giving way to brightness and some sunshine but every now and then, the mist would thicken a bit just to remind us it could come back if it really wanted to.

The initial weather of the day set the pace for business today. The likelihood was that many people has taken one look and made decisions to go elsewhere. It was not the busiest day that we have had but there were still quite a few people who braved staying, or travelling to, The Cove for the day. Quite how we saw so many of them in the shop with all the screeching and wailing going on is anyone's guess

I noticed as soon as I came into the shop in the morning. It was such a high pitch scream that I thought the smoke alarm was going off. It was also all pervading and intermittent, which made it very difficult to track down. I got there in the end by turning things off and nailed it down to the dairy fridge. I surmised that it was the fan and probably a bearing. I called it in but was told they were busy and it might take some time to get to us.

The engineer appeared out of nowhere in the middle of the afternoon at which point I was very pleased to see him. Even with my dodgy hearing, the noise was driving me scatty. He confirmed that it was the fan and by which time it was red hot. It only took a few minutes and he had changed the motor for a new one and we are once more set to cool milk without the noise.

We have had an exceedingly pleasant crew here this week without a hint of mask wars to be concerned about. Many we have known from previous years and some have taken advantage of bread orders that they remembered we used to do. We have been unable to do baguettes routinely because they are not wrapped but are happy to do them to order. One couple in particular have had regular orders throughout their stay and arrive each morning with two small children who are constantly happy and smiling. They illuminate the whole shop with their effervescence and it is impossible for them not to make your day. I did award the elder of them four packets of sweets on her fourth birthday (I told her not to come back when she was twelve) that might have something to do with her demeanour in the shop, but I will settle for that each day, thank you.

We have visitors for a few days, a niece of the Missus and boyfriend. We sat up at the table for tea and watched the mist come back in. They can begger off home again if that is all they have for us.

June 23rd – Wednesday

I had a little tête-à-tête with one of the neighbours who works in town first thing while I was putting out the shop display. I explained that the now full windbreak stand was empty last thing yesterday; we had sold the lot. She said that she was not surprised as Tesmorburys nor any of the big discount stores in town had any nor had they for months. I felt a strong tugging at my sleeves and realised that it was the forces of supply and demand dragging me towards the price ticket on the front of the stand. Sadly, the windbreaks we have in the stand now are the last. The short ones are coming, however, after having waited since April for them so we will have a few to play with. I think that after a brief period of bare faced profiteering we will close for the rest of the year.

There was still a bit of breeze around today but it was definitely not 'windbreak must have' territory like it was yesterday. It was, however, gloriously sunny and with that slight breeze it was a day that screamed 'top the aftersun lotion up' at me. So, I did.

The Missus came down to let me go to the gymnasium and while I undertook a blistering session in the heat, gad, the flies, she cleared the store room of yesterday's deliveries. Since fish was not on the menu tonight and my hankering had grown into an obsession, I cooked up a leg of hake for breakfast and had it with a hunk of bread and homemade tartare sauce. Just something I threw together, you understand as time was pressing – or more precisely, the Missus was pressing.

As might be expected we were just as busy today as we were yesterday. This, of course, is relative and comes nowhere close to half term busy but in estimation is probably a little above average for the time of year. Several of our regular visitors have commented upon it. They arrive at this time of year because it is still quiet, so they have had a bit of a shock, although most have recognised that it is a bit of a different year.

I have had an update on the OS service provision from someone who was there. During the day they will serve anyone who comes along and I believe that some food is available, too. In the evenings, commencing at six o'clock, non residents are kicked out. I am sure it will have much to do with staffing rather than management of numbers due to spacing. I am yet to understand why staff numbers are so low given most are drawn from the existing locals not attracted in from afar, which might indicate lack of housing.

While we are on the subject of updates, the Mayflower Autonomous Ship, there must be a shorter name, has been recovered, clearly against its will, and is being brought back to Plymouth for assessment. When there are lots of them and they have guns, remember this moment.

The gloriousness of the day faded somewhat towards the end. Cloud was rolling in and the Misses reported rain in the air when she took the bleddy hound out last thing. It is, so far, very much a start stop sort of summer.

June 22nd – Tuesday

It was not quite the rain that the Missus had hoped for yesterday and delivered a measly six inches into the bottom of the IBC. On today's record, some of that will have evaporated.

It was a cracking good day for windbreak sales. The sun was out in force and that northeast breeze was still blowing strong. It attracted people to the beach in droves and they formed little encampments all along the tide line right up to the entrance to the Valley. They clung on past high water, which was not the biggest today, so we avoided a mass exodus off the beach in the later afternoon.

Before I forget again, I should tell you that the Mayflower Autonomous Ship is in a bit of bother. A friend visiting a couple of days ago told me that it had decided to return home again. I had no idea whether it just did not fancy the journey any more or something had gone amiss. It seems the latter and a look at the tracking, the good ship Mayflower strayed quite considerably off course before it started to head back. It got about a third of the way and has now turned around again but we seem to be lacking some information.

Did it turn around again on its original direction of its own volition, or did we humans interfere? We really ought to know. We have all seen enough films where Artificial Intelligence creations get a little narked when the creators get a big too big for their boots. Even if you have not seen any sci-fi films of the ilk, everyone knows how Frankenstein turned out. I am not suggesting that a 15 metre boat could wreak havoc to threaten the existence of man but it is the thin end of the wedge, I tell you.

Anyway, I will not go on lest you have trouble sleeping tonight. The update on the website tells us that the support team has arrived but gives no indication whether it has arrived with the boat or at some pre agreed location waiting for the vessel to be retrieved. Perhaps it is a Round the Horn version of Frankenstein.

Despite the breeze, some of the fishing fleet were out today again. The sea state is fair and it is only the breeze kicking up some chop but I dare say it was not that comfortable out there. It looks like they were on the pollack again given the big flock of gulls that I caught sight of surrounding one of the punts. One of the newer arrivals to the fleet told me he was having some good fortune on the lobsters at the weekend, so things are looking up.

I cannot say the same for the bees. There is still no honey despite how much people are clamouring for it. The Missus showed me a picture of the finished new hive. Sorry, when I say finished, I am just talking about the paintwork. The frames are yet

to be completed but it is coming along nicely and I am sure the new colony cannot wait for their new home to be delivered. I just hope they know which side their bread is buttered and start knocking out some honey by way of thanks.

As you might imagine, our guests – visitors, not the bees - having been starved of sunshine for a few days sprung back into action today with a vengeance. We were busy from the middle of the morning all the way through until five o'clock. Right in the middle of it came a big fish order, which joined the big grocery orders that has arrived earlier. Quite how I managed to clear the fish away, neatly vacuum packed, I have no idea, but it was required as some of it was for orders placed yesterday. It looked so good I was tempted to have some for tea but it was Mother's day and tea was already planned.

Instead, I settled for a very pleasant view from our window while we ate our tea. It will do for now, perhaps I can have some fish for breakfast tomorrow.

June 21st – Monday

Well, it was definitely a case of being careful what you wished for, although the Missus was in clover. However, the Missus was not the one who had to take a less than happy bleddy hound down to the Harbour beach in the driving, albeit none too heavy, rain and forceful, chilly north easterly. No matter, as long as the IBC was being restocked.

The rain petered out during the morning and was largely gone by the time I finished a right blistering session at the gymnasium. It set me up for the day, which was just as well because although the rain had gone the north easterly kept banging through the shop doorway straight at me. Had it been throwing buckets of water in after me then I might have elected to operate the first electric sliding door in The Cove but I am made of sterner stuff – sometimes.

The weather naturally affected trade and we did not have any. Well, everything is relative. There were people, just not very many. It gave me some time to attend to the Missus's strimmer again. She had screwed on the line cover without the attendant clutch plate which meant she had no way of getting it off again. Sadly, neither did I. The shaft needs to be stopped from moving while the cover is turned and without the clutch plate in place, there is no way of doing that. I tried to get the gear box off so that I could jam the gears but the screw holding it in place if stuck fast. I then had the bright idea of using my impact driver which did the trick but sadly got me no further. I am one arm short of the required amount to hold everything while I turn the cover. I will need to find someone with a vice – of the right sort, of course.

As we slowly traversed into the evening of the longest day, and boy, did it feel like the longest day, too, the weather improved. There were signs of clearing skies and

brightness out to the northwest. Perhaps we shall have a better not quite the longest day tomorrow.

June 20th – Sunday

The forecasters have been struggling with the weather these last few days. I was being polite when I said that I had mis-heard the forecast about rain; they plain got it wrong and again today. I cannot blame them though for the lack of pasties today but it was in the back of my mind when I placed the order for a much reduced number for the weekend. We do not often make the blunder for so few pasties we do not have any at all for a day.

It was a pretty grey day all round and the temperature had gone out of it too. We were steady through the day, but the numbers were not there and presumably St Ives was packed out again. It would seem to me a place to avoid at the moment where the dreaded lurgi not only lurks in every corner but brazenly walks abroad. Surely, we should avoid it like the, erm, plague but especially this year. (Alright, I apologise. The 'especially this year' was gratuitous, completely unnecessary and without foundation. I am sure it is the place to be most other years. Honest, guv.)

We had some excitement in the afternoon. A customer came in reporting that he had spotted a lunch box and some belongings at the foot of Pedn-men-du while he was up there. He had waited a while, but no one seemed to be around to claim ownership. He was wondering if he should call out the Lifeboat. I told him the way of it was to call the Coastguard and that they would take it from there. It was most likely going to belong to a climber, but I told the man that he should call it in if he was personally unhappy as he had seen it and no one else could make the judgement. Since he was still unsure how the process worked, I called 999 for him and asked for the Coastguard then handed over the telephone.

I listened to the ensuing emergency on the scanner. The cliff team turned up for a geek and very quickly established that it was indeed a climber's lunch box and kit; a false alarm with good intent, which happily did not include a Lifeboat launch. We dodged one later on, too, although we did not find out what it was immediately. All we had was a cancelled message on our pagers which meant that the Deputy Launch Authorities has seen the first call and the shout has dissolved for one reason or another before it got to us.

A member of the very excellent Shore Crew with his finger on the pulse called later to say that it was most likely a broken down rigid inflatable boat. It appeared that it was closer to St Ives, so St Ives Lifeboat was paged instead. I do not know who came and rescued them from St Ives after they got there. No, sorry. Very wrong again.

The day turned especially dour in the afternoon and by four o'clock most self respecting visitors had either left or gone and hidden somewhere. I am not sure

whether they were able to hide at the OS as I have heard conflicting reports. It appeared to be open again with people on the seats outside but someone told me they were only serving residents at present. That might have been just for meals but I will have to enquire further.

Our evening meal had to wait a little while for the Missus to come back from The Farm. She was eager to finish her mowing and strimming before the promised rain arrived, whenever that might be. She did say that there was about two inches in the bottom of the IBC so there must have been some rain last night or a very heavy dew. Perhaps tonight is her night because the sky was definitely looking that way at close of play today.

June 19th – Saturday

The curse of the late football match. Our newspapers did not arrive until gone opening time and threw the whole day into turmoil. Alright, maybe not the whole day but it certainly upset the first part of the morning with eager customers left outside the first electric sliding door in The Cove while I got at least some titles on the shelf.

It was some 'ansum morning. Big blue skies and bright sunshine. I had clearly misheard the forecast that I thought had been telling us of cloud and a bit of rain, which had excited the Missus. Her IBC, which is what has been feeding the polytunnel is now empty and in desperate need of filling up again. She does have some water in the butts by the barn but it is tricky getting that from there to the polytunnel in quantity. It has highlighted the need for a water management strategy up there and some more water collection facilities in the right place. A plan is afoot, but implementation will have to wait until winter.

Now that the brighter and warmer days are here our sales of beer increase. We are routinely asked at the counter to open a bottle of beer as most have crown caps and most people do not carry a bottle opener. We would be more than happy to provide such a service but we are an off licence and it is against the law for us to do so. We have got around it by lending our bottle opener and in some cases the customer is happy to purchase one. Well, perhaps no longer.

There is a man of the law who has a property here and visits now and again. Today he came in for a beer and asked me if I could open it for him. I told him, as a lawyer, he should know better than to try and incite me to break the law. He considered this for a moment and came back with a second bottle. He said that he was entitled to ensure that the product was fit for purpose to which end I could open the first bottle and he would take the second unopened. This is a game changer. Anyone now asking me to open a bottle that they have purchased simply needs to buy two – of each type. It is a legal requirement.

Our bright sunny day slowly slipped away above a blanket of cloud. So slow was the change that it was hardly noticeable at all until suddenly the brain woke up to the fact

that the picture outside looked distinctly different from a few hours before. There was even a little shower but not so much as to wet the bottom of the IBC at The Farm. Maybe later.

Business became quite sedate in the latter half of the afternoon. It permitted me to compile an order for our surf jewellery display, which I have become far less studious about. I was trying to keep to a set of products that we had ordered before and we knew sold quite well. The fact of it is that the product set changes each time I look at it, so it is far easier just to be quite random about it. All the products sell to one degree or another so I can hardly go wrong with it.

There was still no sign of rain by the time we went to bed. The forecast for tomorrow is not exactly on the Missus's side either. She will have to spend the day tomorrow carrying a bucket from the barn water supply to the polytunnel. Let us hope there is not a hole in it.

June 18th – Friday

The blind at the back window rattling from early in the morning was a bit of an indication. Nearly being bowled over as I stood outside the shop, was another but a little less subtle that there was a fair old breeze blowing in. As is usual, outside the shop it was coming in from the west but the flags on the Lifeboat channel markers and everywhere else, the wind was north easterly.

The recent heavy seas have thrown up a good bit of oar weed on the Harbour beach. Happily, there are no geet piles of it, just small pieces strewn across the whole beach. They will be gone with the next high tide, I would have thought.

Out towards the north, the gannets were having a field day in a feeding frenzy on a shoal of something out there. It was just east of Cowloe and they were piling into the water, churning it up like a pan of boiling broth. They had flown hundreds of miles just to be there at that moment. Who told them?

Despite the breeze, the sea had lost most of its ferocity of the last couple of days and the Lifeguards had opened the beach for business. There was not much in the way of surfing, but two windsurfers were having a whale of a time scooting across the bay at a great rate of knots.

We closed in the afternoon to mark the departure of a very dear friend. The gentle shuffling off. Mr Tennyson, over to you.

*Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,*

*When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.
Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;
For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.*

June 17th – Thursday

The cloud cover was a little more broken up first thing that gave some hope there might be a bit of sunshine here and there today. By the middle of the day we had sun and cloud in equal measures, the brightness showing off the vivid white of the surf in the bay.

The sea was still raging from early on. Spray was hanging in the air when the bleddy hound and I hit the Harbour beach; I am reasonably certain that it was not a heat haze. In fact, it was a good bit cooler today and the increased breeze seemed to be the culprit for that. The Missus had the bright idea of putting 'wear a mask' signs on the frame of the first electric sliding door in The Cove on the basis that so many flock to The Cove just to admire it. The strategy has been effective and we have had far fewer people just walking in 'forgetting' to put one on. There are still people who insist on walking in with mask in hand. When asked to put a mask on they wave the mask at you as if to say, 'see, I have one, no need to ask'. Not quite the point, we feel.

Since business was not quite so full on as it might be I thought I would spend some time on bolstering stock where we have been depleted with some tactical buying. It is the gift aisle mainly where gaps have appeared, especially after such a busy half term. It was another fraught process working out which of the company's products were still in stock and looking for replacements for those that had gone. We have lost a couple of alternative suppliers this year, so it has been a struggle to make a broad offering.

Gifts taken care of as far as they could be I turned my attention to the freezer. We had purchased temporary shelves, you may recall, to fill the huge gap left by their absence when we purchased the freezer and added some trays in an attempt to stop the contents of each shelf from slipping off. The latter was only partially successful as the contents slipped just as much inside the tray but at least they did not slip out of the door.

I pondered this conundrum yesterday evening and woke up in a lather in the wee small hours with a eureka moment. We had applied some non slip rubber matter to

some of our shelves some years ago and I thought that we had some of it left on the top shelf in the store room. It had taken most of the day before I had sufficient time to look for it and again some more time before it was quiet enough in the shop to experiment.

I chose the chicken and mince shelf as those beggars slip all over the place. The length of rubber matting was not straight at one end, so it took a little while to cut it straight. The mat was too wide but was probably helpful bent up the sides of the tray as extra grip. It worked in the test but we will have to see how it performs at -18° centigrade. I might have cast caution to the wind and done the other three trays but I ran out of mat. I now have to remember back five years or so to work out where we got it from or even if it is still available.

One little nugget of news eluded me until late yesterday. The Mayflower Autonomous Ship (MAS) was launched from Plymouth the day before yesterday and stopped over the Islands on its way to, hopefully, America. It is a collaborative project by a non profit marine organisation, a few high tech UK companies and International Business Machines, who used to make typewriters, but now do Artificial Intelligence.

It is stuffed with cameras and sensors but no people and being 15 metres long is the biggest autonomous vessel to date. Collecting environmental data on the way it is likely to take several weeks to reach Cape Cod – or Cape Horn if they picked a not very good speller to programme it. I took a quick look at the website and it is currently on a heading of 257° in relatively quiet seas. If you have the chance, dear reader, have a geek; it is very interesting if you like that sort of thing. It was named after the Pilgrim Fathers' ship, Mayflower but given it has no one on board, I would have thought Celeste more appropriate but at least they avoided a Boaty McBoatface moment by putting it out for public input. I may well report back if there is anything of note – or I remember to look to see if there is anything of note.

There was no boating in The Cove today, at least not from the big beach because at some point it was red flagged again. There were some surfers out there but so very few they were hard to spot. I rather think that it was a case of hope over experience that they were there at all.

The Missus was late back from The Farm having had a super day up there still painting that hive. I think those bees would have had more chance on a much maligned council waiting list but I am sure these things take time. Tea was necessarily late which gave me the opportunity to pay some bills and do the huge pile of newspaper tokens that had mysteriously built up. Surely it was only a week or two ago I had done them previously? Apparently not. I shall have to watch that because one of the newspaper companies has introduced a deadline for submission and I now cannot remember if it is three months or six weeks. I had more than 200, which was a bit of an effort. Tea was not, though. I am ravenous after a day at the tin stope these days.

June 16th – Wednesday

Our sunshine seems to have done a runner today. It was grey but still quite bright first thing and ever so warm. It was warm and muggy through the night as well, which the bleddy hound did not appreciate.

Today was clearing the store room day of all the groceries brought in yesterday. The Missus is a past master at such work and she can clear it in half a day. Just to make it interesting I called in some more from our local cash and carry for this morning and promptly disappeared off to the gymnasium before it arrived.

With the outlook a little gloomy – except for a half hour stint of clear blue sky after I left the gymnasium – we were not exactly overrun with visitors. That said, we were not exactly deserted, either. We were kept busy, particularly in the afternoon with some early going home present buying.

We are still seeing an increase over last year of payment card use. It seems that up country it is all the rage, and the use of cash is seen as some sort of ancient ritual. For some you might think that it was an ancient ritual akin to human sacrifice if cash is asked for if the total purchase is a small amount. Others, though, can struggle with the technology and find the concept of contactless payment baffling. I am sympathetic since there are aspects of my smart mobile telephone that are a complete mystery to me, but it does not stop me from having a bit of fun with our customers from time to time.

One lady made a purchase a day or two ago for £4.98. Our machine failed to read her card the first time so she reorientated the card to try again. It worked the second time and she said that she was worried that she might have had it upside down. I assured her that upside down did not matter before telling her that the machine had charged her £8.94. I gave her my best conspiratorial wink as I said it and fortunately, she saw the funny side. We grumpy shopkeepers have to make our own amusement, you know, as long as we have a thick acrylic screen between us and the customer.

Towards four o'clock the weather closed in a bit. After four o'clock, it closed in a lot and started to damp a little. The sea state had been worsening all afternoon and was throwing significant white water up Creagle and Aire Point before they disappeared from view. There was a lot of white water in close and the conditions were bad enough to close the beach. It also looks set to last and looks like it might scupper a Lifeboat launch tomorrow.

The poor weather drove the Missus from The Farm where she had gone to finish painting the second hive. She managed to finish the job so it will just need frames made before it can be put to use with the swarm that the Missus picked up last week.

Our business day came to a natural close, which is always pleasant and with no five minutes to closing rush we closed on time. It was only at this point that I noticed we had been cleared out of Cornish biscuits. I will have to do some ordering and restocking before we open tomorrow. We cannot have no biscuits on a going home present day. Whatever next?

June 15th – Tuesday

We, that rather made my day. Not only was the sun shining and the birds singing – if we had any I am sure they would have been – but I am not as out of date or behind the times as might have been thought.

We had already had our moment on the beach where, in a reprise of yesterday, we met with bleddy hound's best pal and watched the brown-grey fog in the west hanging in silent menace. Once again, I forgot my paddling feet but the sea was a lot less inviting today having been stirred up by some unseen hand and throwing a bit more swell at the beach. It was still some 'ansum down there in the sunshine and I am not sure that the bleddy hound wanted to come away this morning. I cannot blame her.

Come away we did and like a smoothly oiled machine our deliveries were delivered on time and our big grocery order was in and sitting in the store room by the time we opened. One of our first customers was a young man dressed in familiar garb, to me at least.

"Captain Scarlet?" I enquired. The gentleman with our clearly hip and a la mode becostumed friend explained that I was close, but it was another Gerry Anderson creation, Thunderbirds. "FAB", I thought. I was nearly right on. The older gentleman explained that the young man had watched all his old tapes of Thunderbirds going back some and had been enthralled. He also explained, and this is really important, that the show had made a comeback and was entirely current. So, that is me. Finger on the pulse, all round trend setter and man of the moment. Thunderbirds are go.

Just a quick footnote to this revelation. I asked the young man which one of the Thunderbirds he was and he told me he was Alan. Alan? Really? All he did was float around in space a lot. Surely you would be Scott or Virgil, someone who actually got in on the action. The lad clearly has a lot to learn. Anyway, Captain Scarlet was much better.

Given there was a bit of sunshine about, the flocks gathered around and many headed for the beach. We were upbeat and busy for most of the day as people perhaps got wind of poorer conditions from tomorrow. The Missus certainly had and rallied around making preparations for a barbeque up at The Farm later in the day. Mother had family staying, which was all the excuse she needed.

Meanwhile, back in the shop, business heated up in the afternoon. Fortunately, there were sufficient gaps in the traffic to permit me to vacuum pack the large fish order I had called in from our favourite supplier in Penzance. We now have an abundance of hake for the first time in about six weeks along with haddock aplenty. Some of it was for a customer or two and the rest has gone to the freezer. If it does not sell, which is unlikely, it will form part of our winter stock for Mother and me. The Missus hates fish.

We are still seeing a good number of walkers come through The Cove, which is quite late in the year for that sort of thing. I imagine it is perceived as a safe(ish) sort of pastime in the days of the dreaded lurgi. I do try and have a little chat with some of them to see what is happening up the line and perhaps to give them some levity and encouragement on their journey. Enter stage right a couple of the more senior walkers we see on the route and certainly so determined as these. The first lady told me that she had walked from Minehead. "Gosh, today?" I asked in my best jovial tone with my very best twinkle in my eye. She retorted that it was 280 miles and therefore most unlikely, stupid boy. She did not actually say 'stupid boy' but it was definitely there.

The Missus came and got me out of more trouble late in the day and transported me to The Farm. My, how things have grown – mostly weeds. The lane is a marvel of foxgloves, pink campion – which always triggers, 'wonder horse' in my head - and cornflowers. There is enough grass growing up the middle to clean the mud off the bottom of the truck, though perhaps it needs to be a bit stiffer. I suggested that we need to call our man to cut it all back, but she stayed my hand and suggested that it should be after 'no mow May' – it being May in nature not on the calendar. I think the Missus is spending too much time in the wild.

The Farm was no different and the growth had been abundant. It is mainly weeds that are noticeable even in some of the growing areas, they are invading. These are not the only pests and there is evidence in as much abundance as the weeds that bunnies have been at work. All the flower bulbs appear to have been got at along with the peas and beans. A strategy is required, and this may include firearms.

On the positive side, the greenhouse is alive with growing things. They would be better growing in the growing areas but you cannot have it all. Some of the potatoes appear to be coming along but the real success area is the polytunnel where everything is growing like topsy. The Missus has implemented a watering system fed from the IBC. It is evident that we are going to have to get a bigger cabin to feed the container as it is down to a few tens of litres from the 1,000 when I last saw it. Some rain would clearly be welcome.

The top and the bottom of it all is that we are learning as we go along. It is becoming certain that a second, probably bigger, polytunnel would be a good idea. We also need to address the bunny problem. While shooting the beggars is an idea, it

probably would not be that effective; they can breed faster than I can make bullets. Some clever fencing is probably the answer.

I can see my winter schedule shaping up nicely.

June 14th – Monday

What a rip gribb ... oh, it went.

We met with the bleddy hound's best pal down on the beach this morning. She and the owner were paddling and I felt a pang of regret that I should have come down in my feet and joined in. The weather was sublime at seven o'clock in the morning, the sun beating down and the clear, clear water; we could have been in Barbados. Out to the west, though, lurked a dreadful spectre – fog coming.

By the time I opened the shop, we were fog bound. A big lump of it was sitting on the top of the cliff and stayed there for the duration of the morning, By the middle of the afternoon, the fog had mostly cleared but it left us overcast and grey, What is that? High level fog?

As is always the case, our trade suffered because of it. Having said that, the Missus seemed particularly busy when I left and when I returned from the gymnasium in the later morning. It went a bit quiet after that so I busied myself with clearing the store room ahead of the two big grocery deliveries coming tomorrow. It only seems like a day or two ago that I cleared the last of last week's order, which the Missus usually does on Wednesday. I cannot remember exactly what got in the way of that. Perhaps I ought to keep a diary so I can look back to remind myself.

Some things, however, make the whole day worthwhile. One of our current regular visitors who, a day or two ago, purchased one of Colwith Farm's most excellent bottles of vodka made from Cornish potatoes, enquired as to whether the vodka with seaberry or sea buckthorn, if you prefer, was worth a tipple. I have tried, in the interests of customer care and safety, you understand, all of our current brews apart from this one. Last time we purchased from Colwith Farm I asked if they might send samples, which they very kindly did. I had forgotten until this moment that I had a miniature of the seaberry vodka smuggled away in the store room. It was time to bring it forth.

Far be it from me to make a customer do something that I am not prepared to do myself. I thought it would be incredibly rude to let our friend sip alone so, against my sworn obedience to complete sobriety during shop opening hours, I joined him in just a toothful. It is quite some time since I sampled the original vodka; I remember the falling over afterwards. My word, what an 'ansum tipple it was, quite sweet and ever so smooth. I shall, of course, have to beat myself with birch twigs and sacrifice a fatted pasty (calves and lambs are so hard to get hold of these days) to the small gods of shopkeepers for my lapse in protocol.

The Missus was very late heading up to The Farm today. She still has pressing work in getting the second hive ready for the bees she captured the other day. There is still no sign of sensible amounts of honey being available, so everyone will just have to be patient.

Being late going also meant she was late coming back and she brought with her the stock I had requested for the shop. There was quite a bit of it. The whole process of unloading and a five minutes to closing rush forced us to be late closing and after that there was the restocking of shelves to be done. Those long summer work hours are beckoning and this is just practise. We can hardly wait.

June 13th – Sunday

We have had all manner of excitement today and all of it very pleasant, I am sure. Throw in a proper rip gribbler of a day and we had the recipe for a super day.

We had a few visits yesterday, but the place was crawling with police today from time to time. I could have done with them yesterday for one rather unsavoury customer, especially the British Transport Police who turned up armed to the teeth, which is an assumption as I could not see their teeth. They looked very intimidating, which I suppose is the plan, and would have done very nicely in ejecting my pal. I had thought to tell them that it is against the law for on duty officers to buy things in shops, but they had guns, so I guessed that was going to be just fine.

Later we had the Metropolitan Police, who just had a stick and handcuffs and supplemented his weaponry with stick of rock from our gift food section. The early lot had been billeted in one of the caravan parks in Hayle and what with the sunshine it must have felt like a proper beano. No wonder they were buying rock.

The day could not have looked or been more glorious. There were blue skies brightening up the bay and at low water there was a smooth glassy sea with just enough surf over at North Rocks and a bit of a shore break opposite the Lifeguard hut to keep the surfers and aspiring surfers happy for the most of the day.

You will gauge from that, dear reader, that I had a bit more time on my hands to gaze about today. It was a proper rip gribbler profile to the day with heavy shopping during the morning and a lull during the afternoon while everyone was at the beach except on this occasion, we did not get run over in the rush coming away from the beach. We were better off on the beer front, too, since I had time every now and then to top up the beer fridge. The wine, however, took a real beating and my stock room cupboard is bare. We will have deliveries tomorrow, but I can see this running and running for now.

Later in the afternoon we were treated to a show by some American car enthusiasts. I only saw two but I understand there were a few more. One was a Dodge Charger

and the other I could not tell you except it was massive with tail wings. They revved up going past on the way out and made everyone jump – alright, they made me jump.

Our day was quite as busy as yesterday, but it was filled with pleasant customers and we really could not have had better weather. I think I shall settle for that.

June 12th – Saturday

Phew, what a scorcher – possibly. Well, it looked very pleasant and was not too bad when the bleddy hound and I hit the beach in the morning. Then, there were still signs of the mist hanging around and the sky to the east was still a bit grey and cloudy. By the time I opened the shop, however, bright sunshine abounded and very pretty it looked too. That was about the last time I saw outside until well into the afternoon.

It did not take very long for the hordes to amass. I missed them amassing and it was not until a customer asked when pastie might be available I looked up to check how busy it was that I noticed that they had amassed. Pasties were ready very shortly after my wake up call and soon we were inundated with visitors. This busyness persisted into the afternoon as if they had never been away, hiding from the mist for three days.

I did think that I had been quite clever in calling in the fruit and veg that needed weighing ahead of our opening. I also called in more stocks of fudge bags and biscuits but after being distracted by newspapers and pasties arriving my clever plans crumbled to dust. The fudge and biscuits were still in the store room half way through the day.

The fact that the OS is closed has become more common knowledge now. I felt it a bit uncharitable to break the news here first, but they had a case of the dreaded lurgi and shut down as a consequence. This has left the residents high and dry but I understand that they have been compensated although those staying are struggling to find meals. As one resident put it, there are only so many times you can have fish and chips.

What I did not immediately recognise was the impact that this would have on us and after the second time that our beer fridge was emptied, I started to have a clue. The thirsty hundreds descended on us and our friends next door – remember those pumps he had put in, clever lad – and started to strip us of alcohol. We were already struggling to find any ‘flavour of the year’ cans of Sharps Offshore because it has suddenly become very popular, now we are out of other lines, too. We shall have to wait and see how this pans out during the week as the smart money is on the OS being shut for ten days.

Out of all the busyness came some familiar and very welcome faces. I think I am right that they missed last year and were sorely missed. I could be wrong as time has little meaning here and years roll together. They very kindly bought most of the shop for their stay and came back several times for forgotten items. Had we only known I would have doubled our grocery order last week and bought in extra tonic.

It was well into the afternoon by the time I was able to have a quiet geek down on the beach. As you might imagine, it was busy down there with tents and windbreaks, although with little in the way of wind ours stayed resolutely in the stand. The big swell from yesterday had moderated a little but there were still heavy waves running in at high water. At least I could see that there was no particular big spray running up the cliffs across the bay today.

The Aged Parent had sent me a message when I looked up my electronic mails at the end of the day. He was chuffed to tell me that the Duchess of Cambridge and Mrs Biden visited his old school at Connor Downs, which is now, proudly, an Academy. He said that when he went there in the late 30s and his father before him in the early 1900s the institution had earth toilets. That is still the case for our half of The Cove, but he trusts things have moved on for the school. At least his school is still standing. They flattened mine, I think in an attempt to airbrush that sort of establishment from history.

June 11th – Friday

Our thick mist continued into today and persisted once again. We are definitely in May, but no one has told Time yet. I cast caution to the wind, and there was a fair bit blowing up from the Harbour beach, and left my rain jacket behind. It did do the same as yesterday and come to heavy, fine rain but not until we were safely off the beach.

The day started with a bit of a coup; a success; a feather in my cap and a stunning breakthrough. The air compressor that I purchased, ball inflation for the use of, arrived with an incompatible connector to the air hose that I decided to keep from the other machine. This presented a bit of a problem.

Before I placed the order, I reasoned that should this happen, I could always change the hose later. That was fine until I discovered that the shortest replacement hose was ten metres long, which was a bit much. I then looked for adapters and purchased one that, on paper, was correct but the thread was too short to work. I set about looking for alternative adapters until my logical thought process ended up thinking that the screw fitting on the old machine should, in theory fit the new machine. It took some concerted effort to remove it but it fitted perfectly and I now have a working ball pumping up air compressing machine. What a clever sausage, I am.

We had a fairly straightforward morning. Things took their time to get going as seems to be the way of it these last few days. It took until into the afternoon for business to properly perk up and by that time I had gymmed and had my foot lady attend my feet. You know when you have made it in life when you have a foot lady to do your feet. May you aspire to having one, dear reader.

When I returned, walking on air, the joint was really jumping. It must have been a mix of joiners and leavers given the sorts of things that were being bought. At some point it reached fever pitch but I could not tell you exactly when and in the middle of all this, deliveries arrived. I had thought that I was getting ahead of the posse on the boxes that had arrived on Tuesday, but I am now way behind again.

Into this melee came a telephone call from a customer who had arranged a grocery delivery. It is not something that we generally do but the customer had made a good case and we were happy to help. The request came several weeks ago and the list contained mainly goods we stock regularly. Despite the advanced notice and a reminder last week I had completely forgotten it. It was doubly fortunate that we had nearly all the goods in stock and that I had a few minutes to run around the shop with a basket in one hand and the list in the other, collecting the required items. Gosh, it felt good to be living on the edge.

The Missus cleared off to The Farm despite it being quite late in the day. A little time up there is better than none at all especially when there is so much to do. She came back with a bit more salad, mainly because a neighbour asked if we had any. Things are clearly growing fast up there.

For the first time since the morning I was able to look out to see what was happening in the bay. I saw earlier that there were a few surfers in the shore break having a good time but it did not really register with my consciousness. It was only when Mother mentioned later, when I went up for tea, that the sea had become a little boisterous that I noticed the quite rapid change. Sure enough, a fairly sizable swell had somehow appeared unnoticed, to me at least, and was providing some serious surf waves for the boys and girls who were up to it. I would tell you about big waves lumping up the cliffs but I could see no further that the end of the wall by then.

We do hope that will be the last of mist for a while.

June 10th – Thursday

Our new neighbour in the Sennen Cove Café dropped in during the early part of the morning. He asked if we would like to join a sweepstake for Euros. He is such a personable chap that I did not like to say no, so we bought one each for me and the Missus. “One more thing”, I asked as he left, “what’s a Euros?”

It was the sort of day for a punt on the horses, the mist we had yesterday had turned to fine mizzle. I thought I had better take a jacket down to the beach with me but

spotted my rain jacket that I had left downstairs. It was most lucky that I chose that instead because while we were down on the beach that fine mizzle turned into fine but heavy rain. The bleddy hound was less than impressed but found that she could not make the speed up the slipway that she would have liked in the circumstances.

It was not all doom and gloom, sometimes it was just doom. In the latter part of the morning the skies brightened somewhat through the mist. I am guessing that is not when the sun's partial eclipse was happening, which I only heard about in the morning on Radio Pasty. I am guessing we did not give two hoots about an eclipse that we could not see as long as it stopped raining.

It often happens that after a period of poor weather that seems to be persisting, people give up hiding away and brave the elements. So it was today, and the street thronged with happy, if slightly reticent, revellers. There were a few tents dotted about the beach but gone were the collection of little camps strung out along the high tide mark. There was very little in the way of surf but a few of the hopeful gathered in the shore break. Most were buying going home presents because I had to stop working my way through the groceries in the store room to top up the fudge and biscuits.

You will gather from that, the Missus made off in the direction of The Farm, having not been able to go the day before. I do lose track on what she is up to but there seems to be a constant cycle of planting and harvesting and cutting the grass in between. She brought back some baby leaf spinach today, some of which was for our tea but the bag for the shop sold before it was even labelled.

With no sea running and it being Thursday you might have thought that someone would have suggested a Lifeboat exercise. Well, you would be absolutely right. They did. It was organised for a six o'clock muster, which is a bit tight for me but the launch was at a quarter past, so I was able to be there for it and to send the boat down the slipway. There was not much slipway for it to travel down as high tide had just passed but there was enough water there for us to set up the short slip for recovery.

The boat was not out for long as it did not want to miss the short slip window. There is a gap between the last moments the boat can come up the short slip and when it can use the long slip for recovery. Miss the shop slip and it is a bit of a wait on the moorings.

Happily, the boat came back well in time for the short slipway. We had been a bit previous in setting it up and had to make adjustments for the drop in tide but when the boat came back, landed on the slipway by a trainee coxswain, it looked to me to be very much a textbook recovery. We are, after all, a very adaptable, very excellent Shore Crew.

June 9th – Wednesday

The Missus and I were really up against it today but it did not start out that way and it was the last thing I imagined on a day such as this.

It started after I drew back the virtual curtains in the living room and wondered if I had drawn back the virtual curtains or just imagined it. The view was the same with them open and shut. Overnight, someone had invited the mist into The Cove and much of the coast, I understood later. As usual we were better off than up the top and it was quite clear that, as usual the mist was sitting on top of the cliff. It came and went during the day and at one point we had a shower of rain, but it cooled most people's ardour for beach sitting and promenading, here at least. I must assume St Ives was heaving all day.

When the Missus came down to relieve me, I took my time to do a full blistering session at the gymnasium as there was precious little business about. The situation was not a great deal different when I came back and we were both ambling through a quiet day. The Missus had brought the business equivalent of knitting down to the shop with her and was busy doing the books for our quarter end submission. All was quite sedate and tripping along in a mist covered day sort of way.

It was shortly before I came back down to the shop that I noticed a van outside delivering. I wondered what it could be because I had not ordered anything apart from a large back order from our main beachware supplier. I had only sent that off yesterday and there was enough for a pallet, so I expected a pallet truck to turn up.

Imagine my surprise, therefore, after I got downstairs to find the outside of the shop littered with delivery boxes. I must have caught them on the brink of a run down here in their own truck, which they try and do as much as possible to save costs. It left us with a bit of a mountain to climb to clear the order and move it up to our store at The Farm and distribute what we could to our shelves.

When I arrived downstairs, the Missus set to with a vengeance, opening boxes and pricing the contents so that it could be whisked away. Unfortunately, the back of the truck already had some body boards in it and the Missus's strimmer which she had brought down to ask me to try and dislodge the bramble cutter so she could put the strimmer head back on. I gave it a go but it clearly needed some clever trick to loosen the fitting. As luck would have it two lads were in the shop, employees of a company that do garden type work. We bribed them with pasties and pop and they had the blade off in no time.

Customers started to emerge from the woodwork once it had become clear that the weather was not going to improve and that we were both busy with unpacking boxes. As it became busier, our unpacking slowed to a crawl, fitting in opening, pricing and distribution between bouts of customer serving. The Missus is a powerhouse when it comes to bulldozing through work like that but it still took until well into the afternoon before we were even close to finishing. Even then I had to pile some of the

unfinished boxes into the store room along with the remnants of the grocery orders that still had not been touched.

The last hour or so of opening descended into mizzly desolation. There were a few hardly souls about including one senior television personality who I only confirmed as who I thought she was after she had taken off her mask outside. She looked very much smaller than on television and you would have thought it the other way around unless you have a very big television.

Our work continued into the evening as we finalised the end of quarter counting and invoice inputting. That was the easy one to do. What a comforting thought.

June 8th – Tuesday

Well, I am not so sure I remember when a plan came together quite so well as it did today. We had the weather to go with it, too, with proper warmth from the very outset of the morning as we patrolled the beach, bleddy hound and me. I had got out of bed a full twenty minutes earlier than the alarm going off, which helped tremendously and meant that I was not watching the clock all morning before shop opening.

The big grocery delivery arrived early and, even better than that, arrived with two crew. We shipped everything inside way before we were interrupted by any customers. On top of that we had a frozen food delivery and our secondary grocery supplier delivered a little later. The frozen having arrived in the middle and at the time the Missus was getting ready to head off, was perfect as it meant we had room and manpower to get it away quickly. The only fly in the combined consommé was that our big grocery supplier is back to its old tricks of not having sufficient retail stock and we were shorted on some key items.

Our secondary grocery supplier put forth a message last week that Marmite is back in stock. It is with them, although the big national supplier has yet to make it available. My understanding was that it came into short supply because the brewers had stopped brewing. Presumably Tesmorburys, which had it throughout, has some sort of priority over the available supply.

I had avoided some of the gaps in our offering by using the supplier that we usually use for stationery. It also does a good line in household and toiletries, which our big supplier has stopped doing and at a good price. This delivery also arrived in a timely manner and by the time the Missus left, I was able to start unpacking and putting out on the shelf. The timing and sequence of deliveries really could not have been better. I will, of course leave the man bulk of it for the Missus to do tomorrow. I just know how disappointed she would be if I did not.

Radio Pasty reported this morning that West Cornwall had been treated over the last few days to some free air displays courtesy of various military providers. We tend to get more than our fair share in The Cove with a regular visit from a Merlin helicopter

from Culdrose on training flights. Today was our turn to be treated by the out of towners and we had a Chinook seeing just how low it could fly through The Cove. Carn Olva is 90 metres and it was flying well below that. I could not say exactly how close in it was on the first pass but the pilot had brown eyes and as wearing Aramis aftershave.

There was quite a bit of big, fluffy white cloud about but that warm sunshine persisted throughout the day. The bay looked sublime with its mottled colours and cloud shadow here and there across the cliffs and people amassed – well they would have done had they been in bigger numbers – on the big beach. From around half past three o'clock I was quite taken aback by a sudden increase in customers. The numbers increased somewhat and became a constant flow almost until we closed. I was confused at first but then noticed the sea and concluded that our big wall of customers were refugees from the beach having been chased off by the burgeoning spring tide.

The sudden influx made quite a difference to a fairly standard day at the office. My last remaining long term pal sent me a birthday gift that came to me a little late. It would seem rude not to try a nip before I retire tonight, to celebrate the day, you understand.

June 7th – Monday

Well, there has to be something wrong with the lot we have this week; they do not seem to eat pasties. I mean, what are they doing in Cornwall if they are not going to eat us out of pasties every day. Yesterday, I sold about half a dozen and today did not seem much better. I was a tad alarmed when I returned from the gymnasium and the Missus had sold through the pasties I had left with her but after that, nothing not a ... er ... sausage roll. They did not sell, either. I am going to order in a sensible number for tomorrow and if they do not go, we are going to have to have serious words.

It was such a cracking day for a pasty, too. The sun was beating down from early doors while the bleddy hound and I and her best pal were down on the beach this morning. It was the sort of morning you could have just stayed there until it became too hot to want to anymore. I am sure it did get too hot later. It was doing its best when I walked down to the gymnasium. It is the only time I get to be in the sunshine so I make sure I have my hooded sweatshirt on and my long shorts. You can never be too careful, you know, although I cast caution to the winds between my knees and my ankles. I do hope I do not regret it later.

While I am still in a playful mood, I should share with you that the Missus dropped our friend R off a couple of celery plants. You may recall that R is the one with the excess earth we moved up to The Farm. I have no idea why she chose the celery. Perhaps it is because he is such a good stick.

We became quite animated in the afternoon and I was hardly left alone for a minute. Naturally, in the quiet moments before, I had taken it upon myself – mainly because there was no one else to do it – to clear the store room ahead of the two large deliveries we have coming tomorrow. This task took the rest of the afternoon and was not helped by the arrival of an unexpected delivery of fudge and biscuits. As luck would have it, the space usually allocated to those boxes had just become free having been used up by something else when they ran out. It is the way of the store room that as soon as a space becomes available, no matter how important it is to keep free for the thing that usually sits there, it will be filled by something else.

I managed to complete my task at the last gasp, while our teatime pasties cooked in the oven. This allows the Missus some precious extra minutes up at The Farm to finish whatever it is she had to do during the day. Apparently, beetroot, courgettes and chard have gone in, which reminds me of a parlour game (something we played before television, children) played at one particular great aunt's many years ago. If the world burnt down what would be the last place left standing?

June 6th – Sunday

There was every chance that it was going to be a bright and sunny day but when I opened the virtual curtains there was still mist on the hills. It was perfectly dry, windless and warm outside and the sea at low water was particularly quiet. I think that the bleddy hound would have stayed out a bit longer because it was cool in the slight breeze and better than being indoors.

It took until the middle of the day for the mist to clear away and, sure enough, the sun came out in lovely blue skies. It was probably busy, but it was difficult not to judge by last week and the whole day seemed slow by comparison. The wealth of pasties I had in for the weekend hardly moved at all today and ended up in the freezer just in case we are short another day,

The Missus did not get away at all yesterday, especially in the mucky weather of the afternoon. Today, she was out early to collect Mother and spend the day up at The Farm. She was half way through tomato planting last time she was there, so that had to be finished and to attend to the new bees. She had to return to our friend's garden as he had discovered some more bees there. We think that they were part of the same colony she took away earlier and had been left behind. The Missus had used a cardboard box as a temporary hive and put a couple of frames in it. Our friend rather bravely, or foolhardily, took them up to The Farm himself yesterday but they would need to be reintroduced to their pals properly today.

It took me nearly all day, but I put together the grocery orders for next week. I am surmising that it must have been quite busy today because it does not ordinarily take that long to compile the list. It involves filling the shelves and checking the store room for stock and that cannot be done with customers in the shop, so I must have had a few. I will hand it to the Missus so she can check my handiwork.

It is unlikely that I will get another chance in the shop to complete the inputting of the invoices, so while the Missus attended to the grocery orders, I did my invoices. I would rather not use my evening for work, but needs must, and we are already a week delayed on doing it. I suspect the next one will be even harder and I will have to make sure it does not all get left until the last minute.

The Missus's efforts up at The Farm have certainly paid off. She came back with a veritable forest of salad leaves and we now have fourteen bags of mixed leaves in the fridge. Clearly, it would have been better to have fourteen bags last week, so we will have a word with nature and see if she can't get her timing a bit better next time.

We had the leftovers for tea with a beef baguette. The Missus did not grow the beef but there is still space up there at The Farm for a bit more production.

June 5th – Saturday

What a happy result, I had some concerns all morning that we had rather over-ordered on our bread. It is quite a common occurrence each year for the first busy period when I order more and more each day to try and gauge demand for the next day. It gets to a point when the demand very suddenly drops away and the bread we have ordered to cope with the next day's demand, starts to pile up. I think we had nigh on twenty loaves of white bread in the morning. Then, quite by chance, the chef from the OS turns up with a bit of a bread emergency and took ten loaves, both brown and white and two minutes after he left, the chip shop turned up for another three white. Solved my problem in a stroke.

I caught a bit of the weather forecast on Radio Pasty yesterday. For the first time in a while they noted that the weather was expected to be fine, except for the Isles of Scilly and the Far West of Cornwall. They were not wrong. First thing in the morning I was met with a light mizzle, which was not unpleasant to be honest, then later in the morning, a thick mist descended and enveloped the top of the cliff all around. I suspect it was as thick as a bag up the top.

Probably not all to do with the weather but we did have a marked drop in the number of milling about people. We picked up some trade from the last of the leavers and then there was a lull from the middle of the day as we waited for the new arrivals to appear. Things might have improved later in the day as more arrived but the mizzle that was still swirling about became heavier and chased nearly everyone away. It would not have been so bad had we been closing at six o'clock again, but it was the last day of our extended opening.

At least it gave me a little time to process some more invoices ahead of the quarter end submission. It also reminded me that I had mislaid the invoice for the digger. I recall the Missus handing it to me but could not remember where and neither could I find it anywhere. I was pretty sure that it would turn up and I was right, too. It was

when a customer placed an order for some cold pasties for tomorrow and I wrote a reminder on a piece of paper I tore off a sheet that I found it. Oops.

I had just finished putting the invoices into date order, and gluing the torn one back together, when our fish order turned up. I had given up hope of it arriving and had informed the customer not to get over excited about a fish supper. It was quite timely as the customer showed up shortly afterwards and was delightedly surprised. To bolster the order, I had added some pollack and what arrived was prime fillets. They are now vacuum packed and will be ready for the shop freezer tomorrow.

It was a pitiful end to the shop day and an exceedingly busy week, interspersed by the arrival of some familiar faces, which was pleasant. Some of these people we have known for nearly twenty years and count more as friends than customers. Sure, we only see them once or twice a year but quite often it seems much less. If I ever need to wonder why I am doing this strange job ...

June 4th – Friday

Ah, you have to just love it. The latest call of the maskless warrior is, "it's alright, I have two jabs." This clearly absolves the claimant from having to obey all the laws of the land. "Yes officer, you are right. I did throw a brick through that jeweller's window and rob all the contents of the display, but it's alright. I've had my two jabs."

There, that is much better off my chest, thank you.

We were presented with another glorious day and first thing, down on the Harbour beach and it was oh so still there. It was so quiet I thought that I had gone deaf ... er. Not even the sea was making a sound as it rippled against the shore. I could have had a paddle had I been wearing the right shoes and the bleddy hound was not too fussed about going in despite being so hot recently she has been continually panting.

The day was markedly quieter than of late as the majority made an exodus. We waved goodbye to our friendly families, including the hordes of children as they left sporadically during the day. I met with people just arriving who spoke of lines of traffic, nose to tail in all directions east. I am very glad that I rarely have to travel further than Penzance and even then, mostly during the winter.

I kept my gymnasium session brief again because it was unclear how the day would pan out. As it happened, I could have had a full blistering session but I shall make up for it next week. The Missus ran off to The Farm soon after I came back. There are plants flowering in the greenhouse because she has not been able to keep pace, but she did manage to plant the 200 turnips – swedes to you – that will come to fruition after we close at the end of the year. I think we might have to run an online vegetable service in the winter, else I will have my work cut out making pasties.

Before she went I just had enough time to identify and purchase our new air compressor. If my calculations are correct, I will be able to inflate twenty footballs a minute, should I so desire. To achieve that rate I would have to be rather nifty at finding the valve on each ball and taking the needle out of one for the next. It is more to do with having a machine that I am not waiting to catch up while trying to get the job done quickly and efficiently.

While it was much quieter today our customers strung themselves out throughout the day so that I was never alone, which was most thoughtful of them. This meant that any restocking and other ancillary tasks, such as making sure we had a constant supply of pasties, was difficult and sometimes impossible. I was grateful, therefore, near the end of the afternoon that things went quiet. I seized the opportunity to get some drinks into the fridges half way through which task I was descended upon again. I gave up and will have to get up early to do it tomorrow morning.

It seems that there was an army of late leavers who decided to come and get their leaving presents and holiday let restocking in the last half hour of our opening. They were joined by some early arrivals stocking up for the week ahead. At least this denuding of our shelves happened before I placed orders for tomorrow. I think tomorrow morning is going to be a bit busy, even before we open.

June 3rd – Thursday

I was up with the lark this morning, probably. Since we do not have any larks here I can only surmise, but it was jolly early nonetheless. It was already bright with sunshine, although there were quite a few big, fluffy white clouds about and warm, too.

I wanted to get a jump on the day, to fill up the soft drinks fridge and to blow up the few balls I had left in the shop as extra stock. In the time I was there the newspapers turned up along with half my order from a grocery supplier. For some reason our access to Cornish sea salt has been very limited this year, which is disappointing.

It was even more disappointing to discover that our twenty year old or more air compressor was about to give up the ghost. They just do not make things to last any more. In truth, I knew it was on its last legs as it keeps on firing off the pressure value instead of stopping. Today, I turned it off half way through the job while I opened some packaging, and when I turned it on again it wobbled and went silent. I eventually found a reset button on the side, but it will need to be replaced, indeed, not just the button, the whole machine. This means learning a bit about compressors so we can get the right one, which I do not have time to do just yet.

Much refreshed from our 'day off' yesterday we were almost ready for the onslaught of another bright and sunny day. This included a tsunami of going home present buying in the afternoon leaving us short of fudge boxes and all manner of gift stock. I

shall bear in mind that when we order next. I should think of a really big number, then double it.

I left the Missus to it in the morning while I ventured into town for the appointment I missed on Tuesday. I managed to re-book my dreaded lurgi injection part two without any of the hassle that I had the last time, and was very determined not to miss it no matter how busy it was.

The journey into town was as slow as I had planned for and managed to get there on time. The traffic heading in the direction of Land's End was fairly continuous and I was very pleased that I had a morning appointment and was heading the other way. I missed the entrance to the new clinic at Penzance on the first pass as it is marked only from the direction of the A30. Coming from town, the sign is for a new housing development as the site shares an entrance. This foxed me and I sailed past it, Fortunately, I had a bit of spare time.

I was struck first by how quiet it was when I was expecting queues of people out of the door. This was the set up that was so efficient that they were asked to slow down. The process was very slick and left me as last in the queue staring down a long corridor to an open door at the end. I was only waiting a couple of minutes before a nurse at the end of the corridor beckoned me down.

I thought that she had taken one look at me and was going to usher me through the out door but there was a small room with another lady at a computer who asked all the questions. It was a ruse I spotted right away that as I answered the questions the nurse was in my blind spot preparing a nasty looking needle. They had made the fatal error of having a mirror on the wall that gave the game away. They got me anyway but that was beside the point, I sussed their game.

The traffic had not bothered to try detouring via St Buryan, which is the way I went back to pick up Mother. The lane from there back to Sennen is full of bloom and it was a pleasure to drive back that way. We picked up the traffic again at the Sennen end of the lane and arrived back in a very busy Cove. It stayed that way for the rest of the day, too. I could not possibly tell you when the five minutes to closing rush began and ended because we did not really get a lull until a few minutes before we closed. I took that as a signal and closed the door quick.

A Lifeboat exercise had been planned for half an hour before we closed, so I left it to my compatriots to carry out the necessary duties. The launch drew quite a crowd and gave me enough of a breathing space to haul in the outside display before I was inundated again. The next time I took a breath and looked out of the window, it was all over. I can only assume that in my absence the boys stepped up and carried out a textbook recovery up the long slip. We are, after all, a very inter-reliant, very excellent Shore Crew.

June 2nd – Wednesday

The weather forecast became a self fulfilling prophecy, or at least the results of it were. I rather suspect that the majority of our potential customers beggared off to St Ives thinking it was going to be rainy all day.

As those of us in the know expected, the rain had all blown through The Cove by the time I took the bleddy hound down to the beach first thing. It was still clouded over then but the sun was breaking through the cracks and it was perfectly bright anyway. The way the sand was eroded at the bottom of the slipway spoke of some very heavy rain that we had avoided.

Typically, when we started out at a very sedate pace and did not need the bread to be quite so early, it arrived on time. It was a tight fit on top of the two grocery deliveries from yesterday, soon to be added to by another drinks delivery today. We were going to get another fridge especially for pasties at the start of last year, but it never happened. It was a mistake not to make it happen this year as I needed somewhere to put the first fish order in a while and the fridge was already nearly full of pasties.

The fish order had been an utter embarrassment. It was supposed to arrive yesterday but our lovely supplier in Penzance let us down. It was not so much that he was unable to deliver the fish but he failed to let us know that he could not and so we were unable to order from one of the alternatives. Still a bit miffed with our Penzance man, I ordered from one of the alternatives, some haddock for a customer and some hake for the freezer. Cod arrived and albeit rather good looking cod, it was twice the price of what it should have been. The supplier explained that haddock was off the menu and they did concede a bit of an error on the pricing, which was a relief. Happily, the customer let me off light after twice letting him down.

The heavier clouds gave way to light, high level clouds by the middle of the afternoon and the day blossomed. The wind had gone around to the south west by the middle of the day and brought with it warm, moisture laden air, which promptly turned to mist when it met the cold waters of the bay. It is a phenomenon largely reserved for May but it seems we are running a couple of scats behind what nature intended this year. Fortunately, it cleared out before it became too established and was last seen keeping Carn Glouce in a cloud all its own.

We were nearly half as busy as we were for the last few days, which was a bit of a relief to be honest. It is hard to think that we could have sustained that pace for too much longer and kept the shelves full. We will have to become much more organised for the summer and put in place some better ordering procedures and somehow cut out some time for restocking.

What busyness there was petered out towards the end of the day, save for the usual five minutes to closing rush that now starts half an hour before closing. Unbelievably, I was taking enquiries to see if tomorrow was going to be any 'better'

(in terms of weather) than today. I was a bit flabbergasted as today was perfectly warm and dry but maybe not just as sunny as the weekend. Only last week we were praying the rain held off for the holiday. How quickly we all forget. Now, what was I about to say?

June 1st – Tuesday

The day presented itself as a proper bright and shiny one, warm from the outset and that easterly breeze properly dropped out. It was a proper rip gribbler for a while there. It was the absence of breeze that made it, a breeze that had told people that it was not really that warm and that sun cream was merely a precaution for the nervous. It was those people who near enough cleared us out of after sun lotion over the last few days.

Down on the beach from at least high noon, the place was a picture of summer delight. Windbreaks, tents and small camps lined the high water line while down at the water's edge and into the shallows, the swimming area was packed with wet revellers. The surfing action was out towards North Rocks as it so often is and a lone wing surfer practised his art, courtesy of a revived easterly breeze, out in the middle.

It might be superfluous to say that our day was as busy as the last few. It somehow seemed even busier in the morning not helped by the lack of bread until late that caused confusion and return trips. At times it was chaotic but most of the time it was much worse. It was extremely fortunate that our big grocery delivery arrived way before we opened and that both the milk and newspapers were early. It all came together like clockwork but the delivered items stayed put in the store room for the rest of the day untouched.

The Missus came down on the middle of the day to give me a break and after, went off to collect the bees. She took them up to The Farm, their new home, where they will work from the collecting box for now. The Missus will prepare the new hive and build the frames for it, which will now become a priority.

One of the staff up at the Land's End Visitor Centre had a sparkling moment of clarity during the afternoon, which given that they must be as busy as we, was commendable. They had a bag handed in containing passport, credit cards and keys and a potentially ruined holiday without it, I imagine. It had been found up at the coastguard lookout at the top of Pedn-Men-Du but the finders had taken it to Land's End. It was a smart move, therefore, to call us or someone down here to say where it was, and W deserves a lot of credit for thinking of it. No more than half an hour later I had a young girl arrive asking about it and mother arrived soon after visibly relieved.

We stayed busy right until the last knockings, so much so that I lost all track of time and missed an appointment in town. I had such great plans to stop in to the accountant and drop off the end of quarter paperwork having finished it the previous evening, too. I had already missed the finishing the paperwork bit and clearly it was

in my subconscious to do the double. It had me spitting feathers because it will be a proper hassle to try and rebook the appointment but when I do, I shall be mindful to do it next week rather than later in this. Doing anything but serving customers will be a challenge I suspect.

I have told a few people who have asked that this week is all about stress testing our systems for the summer. It has found them wanting but I really do not know what we can do about it because busyness this extreme is unprecedented. I am not even certain that hiring in help will be helpful as it would be an additional task on top of everything else to train and manage the help. We really need a Big Sis here as I could not imagine anyone else being so in tune with how everything works.

There is only one thing for it, open a beer.