

TT 13 DAY 14

Two weeks in and the miseries keep piling up despite the Guvnor's natural inclination to keep his chin and his pecker up and his whinges and rants down to the minimum. After all, he's supposed to be setting an example here but yesterday we all awoke not only to the expected silence from the by-pass (not his heart, at least not yet) but to fruitless kettle boiling and no digital lights flashing comfortingly on the cooker, the coffee maker, the clock and the broadband hub. After several phone calls to neighbours, all of whom worrying that he was going to ask them to do something that involved 'going out', he discovered that it wasn't widespread but confined to us.

Unsure if any electrician would come out, he proceeded to attempt the diagnostic trail, all the time remembering to ensure that all switches other than the one he was testing were off! Failing to find any obvious fault, as we all knew he would, he rang Nigel who led him through a number of supplementary checks, but again to no avail. We gave a collective sigh of relief as he is always quick to quote Corky the Cat (I know, but he is that old) emerging from some scrape with smoke coming out of his ears and his fur on fire.

To cut this boring tale short, good old Nigel did come out dressed sensibly like a spaceman, and a CSI-trained one at that, as he wiped down every surface as he went, and he tracked the problem down to the washing machine 'blowing up'. "Nothing lasts these days", complained the Guvnor but was chastened by his wife who reminded him that the machine was twenty-two years old and really didn't owe us anything. By tea time we had light and

heat but, of course, no washing machine and so ended a day when we all vowed not to take electricity for granted ever again and when the Guvnor was seen with his head in his hands counting the cost; Nigel's call-out fee, time and materials (well worth it) and a new machine ordered for a week's time (still cross about it). An expensive day that had begun, like most, so well.

As an aside, there was a moment when the Guvnor saw Nigel tap something and the lights came on. Just that, he thought, and it's going to cost a lot. And then he remembered the so-called good old days when he took his little red plastic box the size of half a brick to the transistor radio repair shop (they existed in those days I understand). The man in the brown coat behind the counter opened the back, peered into it, took out a small hammer and tapped what looked like a soldered piece of wire. He switched it on; it worked, and he charged £1. The Guvnor, aged about 14, was horrified; "A pound?" he queried, "for that little tap?" The man politely and patiently explained that the tap only cost sixpence; knowing *where* to tap cost 19 shillings and sixpence.

'Robbed' of his pocket money, the Guvnor nevertheless was able to carry on listening to Radio Luxembourg and Radio Caroline under his bedclothes at night and via a wired earphone (now called a 'bud' he thinks) the cricket Test Match commentary during double geography.

Oh, and deep joy at end the day, Loopy came into season which, apart from the inconvenience, doesn't matter much as both Clyde and I have been 'neutered' – although we will probably still make a bit of a nuisance of ourselves for old times' sake.