

Travels (28th July 2012))

Whilst on my travels to see how the rest of the world are getting on, I happened upon an elderly lady living 'up norf' - well, near Leicester actually - and after we had put the world to rights, we got onto glasses and door bells. You know me, talk to anyone about anything.

It seems that we are lucky down here, inasmuch as most advice available is of a fairly high standard, even if we didn't realise it. Apparently if you have a front door bell for the hard of hearing, then anyone would know you were elderly. Also up there, varifocal spectacles are unheard of and don't even think about reactolite lenses (those readers of a certain age know what I'm going on about). Younger ones don't get away either, as someone else had a new boiler installed and when it was checked out, it seems the electrical connections were incorrect.

The solution was a nice new fusebox, a bit of earth wire laid on top of the carpet in the hall to the outside gas meter and all the person said was that he was surprised he didn't get a certificate. Makes me wonder if our MP, Mr Gaulk, isn't right after all, when he suggests that we shouldn't pay cash only not for the reasons reported, more because you may not be getting the competency you think you are paying for.

In case you are interested, the elderly lady was only offered bifocal lenses for her spectacles; apparently she was told that door bells for the hard of hearing have a flashing door push, whereas it's the 'bell' bit that either has a very loud noise and/or a strobe; the boiler wiring was connected to the lighting circuit which was of an age that did not have a facility for earth protection - don't worry, I've had similar 'faults' round here as well - so it seems that generally, we are actually better off down here although this was just a random snapshot.

During this expedition started to wonder if all the government data on our economic troubles are accurate. In the last serious economic difficulties, I can remember noticing the first shoots of recovery by the sudden increase in lorries trundling up and down the motorway network. It took three or four months before it was considered that the 'green shoots' (remember them?) had firm enough roots to grow. We experienced increasing numbers of large lorries both on the motorways and near to the industrial areas of the Midlands. The latest figures show a negative level of growth, but on the day I'm writing this (28th July), one of the American ratings agencies (they who hold the power of interest rates) confirmed our AAA rating.

I suppose you are wondering what we are doing' up norf'. Well, once again we are in a field (well, actually, two fields) away from the river Trent in South Derbyshire mainly because the 1st field was slightly waterlogged due to the combination of the river being about 5 foot higher than normal and, due to a Minister for Drought not being appointed, a lot of wet stuff falling out of sky along with golf ball sized hail stones to knock the living daylight out of roofing tiles and metal boxes on wheels. Sorry. I digress.

It's the location for a really fun packed couple of weekends of dog agility competitions (not!), so I wonder off to gain a different prospective on the world and avoid the pop concert in the marquee, assorted bingo and training sessions. Not to be outdone, in the field across the road, cross country cycle racing, just along the river bank is cricket and I'm sure we had equestrian events a couple of days ago.

Oh yes, while you lot were enjoying the opening of the Olympics on Friday night, the locals held a firework display without telling anyone except the locals. You can imagine how that went down amongst competitors dogs (let's say about 750 to 1000) at 11:30 pm!