

Monday 16th July: Torksey Lock

This morning Wendy rang to say that Rick had had a stroke. We are chiding ourselves that we didn't 'clock this' ourselves and immediately ring 999 – after all, the onset was so sudden. The good news is that he has been released and is on his way back here, as I write this. Further good news is that it was mild, as far as strokes go, and Rick cannot fault the support and attention he was given. When he returns, he and Wendy will take stock and decide where and when they, and we, go from here. It has to be the Trent initially and at present it is running high and fast, the rain continues to fall and the forecast isn't encouraging.

I went on the bus to Gainsborough this afternoon, a 45-minute trip (top front seat of double-decker, both ways!) through a number of pleasant villages, set amid sodden, sad fields. Gainsborough itself was a pleasant market town, the centre itself, a little tired and suffering from recession fatigue (empty shops), not surprising as a smart precinct, using old warehouses, with M&S Food, Next, Costa and other attractive outlets available with parking, and alongside a new, smart Tesco was close by the centre!

As the bus filled with hoards of teenage children, I felt negative, having experienced mouthy, not to say, foul-mouthed, noisy youngsters in similar situations. In fact they were all cheery and chatty, both boys and girls, and I would have been delighted to adopt any one of them!

Wednesday 18th July: Torksey Lock

Still here, tho' Rick has recovered really well and is ready to cruise! On Monday night, after the shock and two sleepless nights in hospital ('the staff, bloody marvellous – only problem, the other patients!') he was still out on the towpath chatting happily as the sun set. He is fired up with intentions to improve his life-style, diet and exercise, and I'm certain he'll succeed! He is most concerned about the exercise issue and its importance was underlined on the national news this morning. The post-60's, apparently, do not take enough exercise. This morning all four of us went for a brisk walk.



For Rick, one of the few eating pleasures left after Shropshire Blue, pies, cakes and such indulgences are dropped, is bread, and yesterday he made his first loaf under my direction; he is even considering making a sour dough starter – there's enthusiasm!

The outcome of the talk on Monday evening resulted in another change of plan. Tomorrow we plan to turn tail and go down to Boston and do 'the drains' – it sounds ghastly but apparently it's peaceful, with wild flowers, birds and even skylarks. By the time we return here, hopefully the river won't be running so high and we'll have a comfortable ride back up the Trent.