

That horrible sinking feeling

This morning I went to help at the Methodist church by assisting in the kitchen with preparing lunch. There are about six of us and we managed to serve three main courses and about six sweet courses to about 60 people. This is very good for people who live on their own or for various reasons cannot cook their own lunch.

I arrived at about 11 o'clock and hung my coat up as I normally do and went into the kitchen and spent most of my time washing out large aluminium pots. It took me a long time to learn that when a heavy aluminium pot has been taken off the oven or cook it retains its heat for a long time so when I casually took hold of the handles to lift it, it was about the temperature of boiling water.

Anyway the session went well enough and then the time came for me to go. I reached into my jacket pocket and found that where my mobile phone should be there was a space. Thank goodness my wallet was still there in my other pocket. So what had happened was someone come along and saw the jacket there and just took it on a whim. They were properly happy with what they got. It's not the phone itself, it's all the contact numbers that I've gained over the last couple of years and I will have to rebuild them from nothing. I thought I might have left the phone at home. When I arrived it was not there. I rang it and it was busy. In other words the person was making the best use of the phone. I contacted 02 straightaway and within 5 min the phone had been cancelled. When I rang it the unobtainable signal was there and no bizarre calls have been made to the other side of the world.

What was more serious was that there may have been some material on the phone that would allow access to my bank accounts. So I had to get on the phone and on the Internet to change all my passwords and fiddle around. As I caught the

problem very quickly no deprivations had been made to my accounts but it could have been so different if I had not been at home, in a foreign country, and in a position to act immediately.

I just didn't think that sort of thing would happen. It is a Methodist church hall where old people go but evidently today earlier a homeless person was seen wandering about so I suppose my "pocket was too much to resist. Unbeknown to him, my Nokia was only half working so in the cold light of day I was good to get another phone anyway and I have to rebuild my list of contacts. It could've been worse but I do find this sort of thing very unsettling and found I was shaking for some hours afterwards but when I write this five hours later I am 75% back to normal. The process of self-healing was considerably assisted by going to the allotment with Françoise and digging weeds and planting potatoes.

I had a rather disturbing phone message from someone that I worked for last week, the man with the old parents who grumpily told me not come back. He did not leave his name and used a withheld number. I get the funny feeling it was nothing to do with me but if it was, we as gardeners do like to know if our work is not appreciated or has fallen short in some way. All the customer has to do is to call and say "look would you mind coming back and doing XYZ." Any gardener worth his salt will surely do that. With the best will in the world it is easy to misunderstand what is required and a good-humoured and positive phone call from the customer will in 99% of cases sort out the problem.

So it's a lovely sunny evening if a little bit cool much look forward to a glass of red wine. In a way I feel sorry for the person who stole my phone, it is really an act of desperation to steal something, is this call for help? There is no harm in sending a person love and caring, it does sweeten the pill somewhat anyway.