

Home renovations – chapter 1

My wife and I do not spend money on anything unless we have to so our resources go on the normal basics, the occasional meal out, entertainment if we feel like it and the dreaded council tax which gets bigger every year. We do not however pay huge amounts for mortgages or rents.

Today, the renovation that we had been talking about for a year or so has come about. We have replaced the dreadful old carpet, very fashionable in the 1970s, flowers with a green background, for a wood effect pseudo wooden floor. The chap turned up at nine o'clock. He does nothing else but do wooden floors and this showed. He summed the whole situation up in a moment and asked the very questions that I was going to bring up i.e. what to do with telephone wires.

I am one who does not like to sit back passively and helplessly while someone else does the work. I stripped out the old carpet and dealt with those horrible pieces of wood with nails sticking out of them. I wish people would not bang nails or attempt to bang nails into concrete because they are very difficult to get out after 25 years. The golden rule of employing someone is that you always offer coffee and not just once, as often as they want. I also offered the chap lunch but he said he carried his lunch in his van.

He comes from Bristol and we discussed the large number of thefts that are happening irrespective of the number of locks you got. He said once that £2000 worth of tools had been stolen because he left his van just for a moment to go into a store and get some sandwiches. Evidently, the police are not interested. It's probably because of the so-called cuts that are happening everywhere. There are simply no police to handle the matters. I do ask myself, we are the seventh richest country in the world so what is the necessity for these cuts in the first place? Do you read about cuts in other countries

Scandinavian countries for example?

The work was finished at about 3:30 PM. He called in someone else to help because a different type of job needed to be done which was to put lino in the loo. The installer liked to play his radio quite loudly and made a great deal of noise using some of the saws and pressure tools that he required. I find it very important not to sour the atmosphere or affect their work by endless talk about irrelevant matters, a complaint when someone is halfway through the work, general life philosophy about builders who have let you down in the past, and any other irritation. Basically, the workers want to get in, do the job, get paid, and leave.

We replaced all the items that live in the hall. There was a totally different feel, clean but clinical, and a little bit echoey. I did not like it but I suppose we shall have to get used to things. When you walk on it it's definitely not like wood but then if you want a real wooden floor you have to pay a fortune.