

Pricey firewood and unexpectedly getting lost in the country

On Friday we went to Longleat to collect our supply of timber for the forthcoming winter season. Two our disquieting rules and regulations have changed. They are not allowed to sell non treated timber in less than 1 tonne units for which you have to pay £154; Kiln dried is £173 per tonne. If you cannot carry a tonne away in your car you can return to pick up the balance. I later mentioned this to my local timber supplier. She knows people who can sell me a 1 ton bag for £65.

For some reason the manager at Longleat has been threatened by fines of £3,000 if anyone goes against the rules, AKA Government guidelines, a common enough tactic to get people to comply through fear. I think it's all to do with carbon reduction and the elimination of log fires from people's homes. Regrettably we shall not be returning again to buy such overpriced wood so this was our last purchase – 200 kg of kiln-dried wood which cost us about 46 pounds.

Today's Sunday we just decided to go to the Book Barn (1 million books) because Françoise wanted to dispose of a number of unwanted books. She was told that they don't buy books anymore but they do have a commercial system whereby they can resell job lots of 500 books and over. Since we only had 16 books with us, we realised that the only option was to give them as a donation which we were glad to do.

As the weather was warm we decided to go for a walk somewhere to be decided but on the way we went to our favourite tea parlour in Chewton Mendip where we discovered a new owner had taken over, a South African. I have been to South Africa over 20 times and can recognise a South African accent when I hear

one even though it might have been modulated due to years being out of the country. His name was Gerhard Perold. Gerhard is pronounced a different way with a different action of the tongue and throat on the 'G'. We had a lovely quiche with salad followed by a lemon pie.

We then left for what I thought was the way to a forest but I lost my way and we ended up in another corner of Somerset where we went for a long walk along a river valley. It's very easy to get disorientated when the sun one.is not shining and we got well and truly lost which meant we ended up walking along some country roads in the pouring rain but we adopted the rule of having the valley on our left side and walked left left left until we found the car again. We decided for future walks to get a local map and a compass. You would have thought it would be an obvious thing to take on a walk but this time we only planned to go to the Book Barn and come back. So much for spontaneity, advantages and disadvantages.