

KIP FENN - REFLECTIONS

EXTRACTS FROM THE AUTHOR'S DIARIES (2003)

I have kept a diary for most of my life, although I only started writing a proper journal in the mid-1970s when I went travelling. They are personal journals, and have never been written in anticipation of being read by anyone other than myself. Except in my very earliest journals, all the entries carry the date on which they were written (not the day they are about necessarily)

The idea of making available my diary entries concerning Kip Fenn did not occur to me until I was preparing the book for publication. There is not as much about the thought processes and research that went into writing the book as I would have liked, especially in the period when I was working on it full-time (2003). Nevertheless, I felt there was enough to make the exercise worthwhile. (These collated entries, however, represent less than 10% of my diaries for each of the three years.)

I have collated nearly all the entries about Kip Fenn from the day I had the idea for such a novel (in March 2001) to the day that I felt it was finished and in a reasonable condition to try and sell to agents and publishers (August 2003). On those specific dates where a Kip Fenn entry exists, I have sometimes included a few extra paragraphs from the same date even though they may not relate directly to the writing of the novel, sometimes because I feel they might give a sense of my daily life while writing the book, or because they give an idea of my political/cultural preferences, or just because I wanted to.

I usually write my diary on the computer (I stopped hand writing my diaries in the late 1980s) quickly without wasting any time on grammar or spelling. However, I do collate the entries once every six months or so and then I subject them to a spellcheck. Usually I find upwards of 500 unrecognised words - mis-spellings, names, and many made-up words. I rarely rewrite/edit any entries. However, for this exercise I have tidied the grammar/spelling a little (but not with much care, it has to be said) and done some slight editing so as to avoid repetition or make the writing less convoluted.

NB: The fact that a particular publication is mentioned in these diary extracts does not, necessarily, mean that I found it any more or less useful than any of the other hundreds of books and internet sites I consulted during the course of my research for this book and which are not mentioned in the diary. If I had found one or more publication or internet site of invaluable assistance, or if such a source had provided specific information unobtainable anywhere else, I would have mentioned it or them in the book itself (as is the case, for example, in my unpublished factual book about a walk across London - London Cross).

Paul K Lyons

JOURNAL EXTRACTS (KIP FENN) - 2003

7 January

I did not manage to start on Kip Fenn over the holidays, largely because of having a cold I suppose, the remnants of which are still hanging on. I did, though, restart my yoga yesterday, which is a good sign. Over the weekend, I found myself working on the diaries again. I realised I'm never exactly clear what I'm doing with them or why. So, for the first time ever, I actually wrote down a set of notes for dealing with them. I also revised my diary index

While I'm on the subject of diaries, I could mention Alan Clark's *The Last Diaries* which B bought me for Christmas. It wasn't a book I would have bought for myself. On the back Lynn Barber of the *Daily Telegraph* is quoted as saying 'The only question now is whether Clark is merely the greatest English diarist of the twentieth century or merely one of the top five.' This book was published posthumously - with his wife's blessing - as Clark died in 1999.

I was about to launch into a rant about how Clark is just an overgrown upper class twit who never made it out of short trousers, metaphorically speaking, when I felt I must have said such a thing before. And if I had, it would have been when I read his earlier diaries, but my memory refused to dish up any details. So I did a word search in my diary store, and found three paragraphs from 26 June 1994. Then too, the book had been given me by B; and then too I wrote about him in the same vein. Here's a taste: 'He stinks of privilege. It is so galling to think that a stuck-up upper class git, who's barely developed beyond adolescence managed to get into the government.' What I find particularly annoying this time round is that he should be considered such a good diarist. Why? Firstly, he's far less objective than he makes out; secondly, he's obsessed with his own self-importance; and, thirdly, he's just a not a very nice person. Stripped of the references to famous people and events, I sincerely believe his diaries are less well written, less interesting, and delve less deeply into the human and social psyche than my own. And, even saying that, I don't come close to Alan Clark's level of immodesty.

Roy Jenkins, another diarist, has just died. I remember that his diary covering the period when he was President of the European Commission, which I read years ago, was rather dull, overfull of details about journeys and daily administrative niggles. In the obituaries, he was generally hailed as a grand political reformer, and as a great prime minister that never was. On returning from Brussels he was instrumental in setting up the Social Democratic Party with Shirley Williams, David Steel and David Owen. It made me wonder whether Chris Patten might not return from Brussels in 2004 ready to lead a new centrist-Tory party. The position of the Conservatives, so far to the right, is a mirror image really of where the Labour Party was, so far to the left, when the Gang of Four felt the need to break away.

11 January

I've now re-read all four chapters of Kip Fenn, which makes for a reasonable length novel already. I remain excited about it (thank goodness), although I did find on this reading, that there were passages where even I lost the thread, the time period, or the people relationships. That cannot be a good sign: if I'm losing the thread, then how is any reader going to manage.

I may have to simplify some passages, or reiterate relationships and chronologies more often. I definitely think the book should have an index of people, noting their relationship to Kip.

Although I can't believe I've got so far with Kip Fenn, I still have huge doubts whether I can make the whole thing work. I mean there is a very little narrative drive, and I'm not sure that the reader will care for Kip - if he/she doesn't care for him, then he/she's not going to be to concerned what happens to him.

14 January

Starting work on Kip Fenn again is always a slow process. Every time I restart it gets slower: there's so much previous material to take into account, so many characters, so much history. In first considerations for chapter five, for example, I find the list of people that will need to be mentioned (along with reasons for mentioning them and their stories) is already long, and yet I don't want the chapter to be a simple record of what's happened to Kip's friends and family. The main new theme for the chapter is the suicide epidemics that are to take place in the 2040s, and the genesis and consequences of this trend. This will link in and lead up to Crystal's suicide - I hope. But I have to deal with Arturo's arrival, too, Guido's growing up, Kip's relationship with Diana, etc all against a backdrop of growing religious conflicts around the world, conflicts which will lead to war in chapter six (the God War as it becomes known, or the Holy War to end Holy Wars or whatever, I haven't found a suitable name yet). But I have thought a bit about this war, and I realised today that it will, of course, have to be like the cold war in the sense that it will build up in stages, and take place all over the world, in those countries which are shared by Muslims and Christians. It will have to lead to major successes for the Muslim world both in terms of territory and power in international organisations. But it's so slow at the beginning of a new chapter, my head is always racing off trying to follow every lead at once, trying to resolve every unresolved situation in one go. I've given myself a full three weeks to write this chapter, starting yesterday, so three or four thinking days shouldn't go amiss.

24 January

Friday evening. It was a cold but bright day. I went for a walk thinking about Kip Fenn mostly. I came up with a new idea, which I shall probably use. In chapter one, Kip mentions a film by a Mexican director called Pam. And, in passing (in parenthesis), he recalls that he met him once. For some reason, I was thinking about this and trying to work out how Kip might get to meet Pam (I like this process of working towards some occurrence made up randomly at an earlier stage). I had vaguely thought Pam might become a Mexican representative to the IFSD; and then I was wondering whether Alan might know him, in which case, at a stretch, Kip and Pam could meet at Alan's book launch which I wrote this week. But then I had a better idea: a powerful organisation made up of film-makers, painters, singers etc. I thought it could involve an independent think tank of retired politicians perhaps, lawyers, diplomats, thinkers, philosophers charged with developing ideas and opinions on ways that artists could influence peoples, organisations, governments for the good of mankind. The members would then be able to dip into the ideas and opinions put forward by the think tank for use in their artistic endeavours, in the same way that soaps are sometimes employed by governments to get across public health or safety ideas. I think this organisation would need to be largely funded by film-makers, but there's no reason why it couldn't involve song-writers, TV soap and drama script writers. It's an idea still in gestation

(I can tell just by trying to write it down here and now that it needs a lot more thought). Nevertheless, I imagine Kip could be the one to seed the idea to Pam, who is then instrumental in setting it up.

This week I have managed to write around 10,000 words, about half of Chapter Five. But, it doesn't feel like I've achieved anything. Now I've given up my business and am focusing almost exclusively on writing Kip Fenn, this is going to be one of the hardest things to combat: the passage of weeks and months without any measurable progress, without achievements to notch up mentally, without seeing any tangible results of my being alive. So I ask myself why doesn't the 10,000 words feel like a result? Better surely than the previous week when I didn't write anything but a page-long plan. I think this is about value and belief. If this book, for example, had been commissioned or a publisher had already signed it up, every word I wrote would feel good. It wouldn't be any the less hard; the working process would be very similar, but, at the end of the day, at the end of the week, I would be able to experience varying levels of satisfaction depending on how much progress I'd made (as was the case with the book I wrote for the electricity industry). With Kip Fenn, though, I'm beginning to realise that I can't or won't view it as real work, a real construction, and consequently it's hard to allow myself any psychological pats on the back, or feelings of self-satisfaction or achievement. (I'm finding this very hard to explain in words.) Intellectually, I can acknowledge I've written 10,000 words and that this conforms with the timetable I've set myself - but, when, at the end of the week, I flick through the 12 printed pages of pure invented fiction that nobody's asked for, nobody wants, nobody will probably ever know about - I get a very, very flat empty feeling. Before, with my monthly newsletter deadlines, at least I had a framework in which I was regularly set a task (by myself evidently) and achieved it - and there was always a real concrete purpose behind those tasks. And there was always another one ahead (in fact, I've lived by monthly deadlines for 15 years). If, then, I spent a few weeks here or there on fiction, it always felt good because this was in addition, an extra to my regular work and schedule. I was fulfilling myself.

Two further thoughts: if I had more faith in my writing or in the work, then I'm sure I would now be finding the writing process more significant, more important. (Ah that's the word I was looking for, I can't feel that what I'm doing has any importance.) But where would such faith come from: having been published previously (which I've already mentioned) or high degrees of self-confidence or the confidence of a wife/partner, which by definition would be based on thin air, and liable to lead to me into pits of despair when the rejection letters start pouring in. It's as though I have the minimum amount of self-confidence, self-belief to be undertaking the task at all, and that there is none left to allow myself to be pleased with myself or to attach any importance to what I'm doing. (And yet, if Kip Fenn were ever to be published, I know I would wish that I had allowed myself to enjoy more confidence in it.)

There is a qualitative aspect to this: the thin/slim sense of achievement that I do manage to feel can be marginally improved if I feel what I've written is good, or completely negated if I feel it isn't very special. This is what happened yesterday when I read over the 10,000 words.

25 January

I spent this morning tidying up various Kip Fenn papers, and reading over cuttings I'd collected. In the afternoon, I started reading the chapter out loud, and making corrections. [For a few days at the end of January, I tried to keep a daily account of my work and working hours.]

26 January

I spent two hours today reading the new Kip material out loud and making corrections. From 4 to 8 I worked on corrections/improvements to chapter five.

27 January

Today, I spent about two hours on corrections, went for a walk thinking about next bits, and started writing again.

28 January

Today, I worked through until 12:30, and from 1:30 to 2:45. I went swimming and got back at 4. I worked until 5, and from 6 to 7.

On *Front Row*, I listened to Mark Lawson interview Nicholson Baker, whose book *The Box of Matches* has just been published. Publication of this book and the fact that it is the subject of a major Front Row interview are further evidence, to my mind, of the cul-de-sac in Western fiction. Baker tells of how he decided to get up at five in the morning, make coffee, light a fire (with the box of matches) for warmth in order to have time to write because he was busy during the day. A key part of this process, he explains, is that he preferred to make his coffee and light the fire and work without putting on any lights, because this allowed him to take a different approach to his writing. What is the book about? Oh! I've just written that down. It's about getting up early in the morning, making coffee, not using any lights and working in the dark. And what was the interview about? Oh the same thing, why he got early in the morning, why it took him half an hour to get ready to write, why he decided to work in the dark, why it was necessary to make a cup of coffee. Mark Lawson's questions to elicit Baker's answers were as serious as if he were asking Bush why he was going to war. I listened with rapt attention. Could art (as in the art of writing) be so meaningless? Yes. By this standard, my diaries must contain a hundred best-sellers.

29 January

No work on Kip Fenn. I've not made as much progress on chapter five as I would have liked. At a very basic 2,000 words a day for ten days (i.e. not counting weekends, even though I do work at weekends) I should have achieved the rough 20,000 word target for the chapter by the end of tomorrow. But, I'm only on about 16,000 words, and I've got at least 5,000 more words to write to get through the planned stories for this chapter. I'll have to work through this weekend as well.

30 January

Today I worked well from 8:00 to 12:30, from 1:30 to 3, from 5 to 7, and from 8 to 9.

31 January

Today I worked on chapter five all morning with breaks to read the newspaper. After lunch I worked, with more breaks, through to about 6:30.

2 February

The snow has finally cleared, and it is a little warmer this morning. The news is dominated by the explosion of a US shuttle, the Columbia, on its return through the earth's atmosphere. It was carrying seven crew members.

I will spend another day on Kip Fenn. I am far from finishing the chapter but I'll try and reserve two to three hours a day in the coming week (even though I have to do some journalism for the company that bought one of my newsletters), to see if I can't catch up on my preliminary schedule: chapter five finished by end January, chapter six by end February, chapter seven by end March, and chapter eight by end April/early May, and completion by end June.

12 February

I'm back on Kip Fenn. I've read through chapter five, and updated my planning sheets. I wish I could be more excited about what I've written. Last year I thought I was thrilled with it and some of the text, or was it just the idea of the book that excited me. Is it inevitable, now Kip's with me every day, that it's going to be hard to be enthused all the time. I mean when I come to look over what I've written, it's never going to seem fresh.

23 February

Surprisingly, I am still on the rough timetable that I set at the beginning of the year to finish one Kip Fenn chapter each month, but this is only because I work through the weekends as though they were weekdays. Despite plodding progress, I still find it difficult to feel good about what I'm doing - there's no sense of achievement at the end of the day. And yet, sometimes, when I'm away from it, say on the train going up to London or walking on the Common, I still get excited by the idea of the book and some of the stories I'm telling in it.

1 March

I plan to finish Kip Fenn by June, which would mean I could start contacting publishers in July. On closing my business at the end of last year, I had thought I would try and boost up my social life a bit from January, yet when I'm busy I have no trouble being busier, and when I'm not busy I can't be bothered to decide on any little activities to fill up the gaps. It's weird really. I think I just need to focus on Kip Fenn now through to June, not worry about all the time wastage that goes with creative writing, and try not to seek or want meaning anywhere else. This would be a lot easier, as I've tried to explain before, if I could feel that Kip Fenn was important and worthwhile.

8 March

I spent Thursday and Friday finishing chapter six. I really hoped it was going to be shorter than the previous chapters, but it's come in at over 20,000 words (the others are mostly 22-23,000 words). By the end of the next chapter, Kip Fenn will be almost twice as long as *BLR*, and it'll still be three chapters shy of an end.

14 March

The week started slowly. By Thursday, I'd only gone out of the house to walk on the Common, to pick Adam up from school, to go swimming, or to try and find some books at the library. Most of the time I've spent preparing to start work on chapter seven.

20 March

I should be working on Kip Fenn this morning. But, so far (and it is late morning) I've done little other than write a letter.

2 April

I've written about 10,000 words of chapter seven, but have taken a day off today - to do some admin.

8 April

At 21,000 words, I must be close to finishing chapter seven, but Kip is only 65. The chapter is supposed to cover a whole decade. I'm not sure I know why this happened - the stories I wanted to tell in the chapter took too long. I've decided I need to take a rain check, which means rereading the whole manuscript up to this point, before carrying on with chapter eight. It was a little dispiriting to realise I've written less than 1,000 words a day since the start of the year. I really should have finished this chapter by the end of March. Perhaps, in retrospect, it will seem that I've worked well, but, on a daily basis, it doesn't feel like it because I'm not doing anything else, nothing at all (except watching television and reading a bit). It's as though I haven't got time; and yet, even on a good day, I only actually write for about 5-6 hours.

12 April

Tomorrow, I'll be back to work on Kip Fenn (and I may do a little sorting out in the garage). Having reached 21,000 words on chapter seven, I came to an abrupt halt. I didn't think it was the end of the chapter at the time, but it seems I've let it rest there (although I do still need to write an annex - every chapter has an annex). Since then, I've gone back over the last three chapters, and I've tried to rationalise my notes about what needs to be revised across the whole set of seven chapters to keep the plot and characters in trim. Now I must press on to chapter eight. I need to make a big decision before starting: whether to have a planetary crisis such as a meteor hit or a major volcano eruption which blackens the sky for several years. If I don't, there won't be too much to write about in the last chapters; and if I do, I might not be up to the business of thinking it through and writing it.

15 April

I've made a start on chapter eight, but I'm far from convinced I've planned it well enough, and although I can invent reasonably acceptable personal story lines, I'm not at all sure I can write about the Second Jihad War and the Grey Years with enough detail or conviction, let alone imagining how things will look technologically/socially/politically 70 years from now.

This morning, early, I watched last night's *West Wing* episode. It was so good. I still think the series is head and shoulders better than anything else on TV. In its dealing with complex political issues and procedures, it makes little concession to a lazy audience. This episode was one in which the author Aaron Sorkin links up, so effectively, the past with the present, not in a soap opera-ish way, but in a complex satisfying way.

20 April

Not very Easter Sundayish for me. I've spent the morning writing the short annex to chapter seven which I'd lazily left unwritten - a couple of letters, Alan's last letter to Kip, and Kip's

letter to Anna after Alan's death. I didn't find either of them easy. And yesterday, after a Good writing Friday, I didn't do any writing at all. I'd got stuck at a point where I didn't feel I knew enough about the characters, especially Lizette's family, or what I was doing with the chapter (even though I had, as usual, a rough plan). I may do some writing this evening, but my head is feeling a bit thick, so I may not restart until tomorrow morning.

27 April

The garden looks lovely in spring, the new growth covering over the untidiness left by winter, and blossom bringing colour, where for months there has been none. As I glance through the window next to this table where I write in the lounge, I can see my apple trees are whiter than they've ever been; next door's cherry is sumptuously pink; the keria and the quince along the fence are competing yellow to red. The seed potatoes I planted several weeks have started to sprout and I go out, at least twice a day, to check on their progress - I love to spot where the leaf growth is just forcing a route through the soil. It's surprisingly difficult to see since the leaf colour is dark and heavily camouflaged.

Chapter eight is coming along; I've cracked the back of it, I hope. I know what I have to write today, and tomorrow I'll do the letters for the annex. I lie awake in bed sometimes thinking of all the things the book is not. Just in the last few days, for example, I've worried that there's not enough science fictiony stuff vis-a-vis the war; that the style of the writing in these latter chapters has changed from the early ones; that there's not enough demonstration of how Kip loves his partners or why they love him; and that there's not enough interweaving of themes in these final chapters with the earlier ones (which is not surprising since I charted the basic territory for the early chapters, and now I'm charting as I go along).

5 May

Satie's gentle early piano works play. I tell Adam my life is a bit like this music: quiet, gentle, unassuming. And it is. This is a real soft, stressless moment in my life, and the only pity is that I can't enjoy it more, both psychologically and practically. And when I think about Kip Fenn, I realise it's probably the most exciting pure writing project of my life, which only reinforces the enviable position I am in.

24 May

It is Saturday morning; intermittent sunshine. England are playing Zimbabwe at Lords. I think Mum and Julian are there. I've Channel Four on with the sound down; and Shostakovitch's tenth symphony plays over the top.

I've all but finished chapter nine of Kip Fenn (just a few letters to write for the annex). Because I'm concerned the style may have changed so much from the early chapters, and because I've got so many notes on style, continuity issues, new ideas, I'm increasingly anxious to start work on a second draft. But I've decided I'll finish the first draft first, and so I must now set to on chapter ten, which will take Kip from 86, when he finally retires from all work, to the present. I've slacked a bit on my planned schedule, but so long as I've completed the first draft by the time Adam and I go to Portugal, I won't be too worried. In fact, I should finish a week or two earlier, which may give me time to work on a few additions, the chapter heading quotes for example.

8 June

Kip Fenn: I am so very nearly at the end of the first draft. It's scary. I may finish tomorrow. Which is not to say there aren't hundreds of things to amend. But to have got to the end, to have written the whole damn thing (I once called it a 'ridiculously ambitious project'), to have invented a 100 years of history, and a man's whole network of family, friends and jobs . . . I'm going to be walking around with something of a glow on my face once this first draft really is finished. My god, have I really done it? written a 220,000 word novel covering the whole of the 21st century? No, I can't have done. What on earth will I do next?

10 June

I should have completed chapter ten yesterday, but I didn't; it's going to be shorter than any other chapter so far, but is, nevertheless proving problematic. I think I may end up having to revise it substantially, but I will get it finished today. I'm promising myself. Then, for the rest of the week, I'm going to try and invent the quotations to head each chapter. But, before I get back to Kip Fenn, I thought I'd take a turn with the journal.

11 July

I am focusing exclusively on Kip Fenn. But I'm in correction stage, meaning I have to read the text over, which I find a little tedious. I thought I might do more at this stage. There are a number of notes I made - during the writing process - which call for additions and changes and embellishments. But I find now, as I go through the text again, that most of them are unnecessary. They were ideas or thoughts I had during the creative phase, and now I realise that there is already enough, more than enough of everything in the text. It is full, very full.

It is taking me about three days a chapter. One day to do the existing corrections and deal with the various notes (and to read some sections and rewrite on the hoof), one day to reread, and a third day to do the new corrections.

On the whole, I am still confident about Kip Fenn. I think I would actually put money on it finding a publisher - and that's the first time, I've said that about anything I've written. But I would so love to have an editor now giving it a good grammar once over for me.

I've finished Claire Tomalin's biography of Samuel Pepys, and very good it was too. Pepys is one of those characters from history that you think you know simply because he's so well known; but I knew nothing, nothing at all. He was an extraordinary man, with extraordinary energy and a gift for social relationships. He was also very bawdy, and wrote about his bawdiness in his diaries - like Alan Clark, and a bit like me in pre-Adam days!

19 July

I must press on with correcting/editing chapter six but Kelly is on mind. David Kelly was a government scientist who had worked in Iraq and knew a lot about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction (the so-called WMDs). He committed suicide on Friday. Earlier, he had appeared before the Foreign Affairs Select Committee (I think) which was investigating the spat between the government and the BBC over the BBC's claim that the government had sexed up a report on Iraqi WMDs, and especially that they could be used within 45 minutes. The BBC made this claim on the basis of a report by a journalist called Andrew Gilligan; but the government responded vigorously to the journalism, saying it was wrong and demanding an

apology from the BBC. The BBC, stupidly and arrogantly, stuck to its guns, and the whole BBC hierarchy came out in support of Gilligan, as though a single apology might bring the edifice crumbling down. The spat continued then, because neither the BBC or the government would back down. The select committee had a quick investigation of the matter, and refused to back the BBC. Meanwhile, Kelly was flushed out by the government to appear before the select committee. He admitted that he spoke to Gilligan (Gilligan and the BBC having refused to name the sources for the story), but, crucially, Kelly stated that he did not think he was the only or main source for Gilligan's story. Despite the Select Committee report, the BBC still stood firm and arrogant, saying it had done nothing wrong, and that it stood by its story. Kelly then committed suicide; the BBC then admitted that Kelly was the prime source for the story. Now there's going to be a judicial enquiry.

8 August

I don't know whether I'm not writing any diary entries this summer because I've nothing to write about, or because I've been so wrapped up in editing Kip Fenn. It was tedious work. I found it hard to concentrate for very long, and was filling up the day with trips to the garden, daytime TV, newspapers (not that I wasn't doing this during the previous six months of writing as well). I had thought this stage would be easier and more relaxed than the writing stage, but it's not. The problem comes when I have to rewrite or reword a phrase or sentence or paragraph. My head is never in writing mode - if I can put it like that. To take a simple example, if I need to rewrite a small bit of dialogue, I can't simply find it there and then, in the moment. It requires a kind of mental energy to get there, into the place, where I can be that person to write that dialogue. Simple proof-reading would be much easier. Almost every paragraph stops me, and demands some kind of rewriting, demands that I get my head back into the psychological or geographical or political or factual or whatever place being written about. When I corrected on the printed page, I would invariably avoid working out a new phrase etc. and simply leave a squiggle down the side, indicating a rewrite. But when I come to do the corrections on screen, I arrive at the squiggle, have a momentary think about why the squiggle is there, and then leave the computer to do some weeding in the garden. Half the time, the sentence or paragraph rewrites are required because my language is clunky or I'm trying to cram too much in, or I'm trying to express something mildly difficult and not succeeding. And, thus, often it takes a long time to find a better form of words. Sometimes, I'm sure, I don't succeed - and this will become apparent on my next read through (which I'm sooooo looking forward).

Also, at the end of this correction procedure, I used the computer's search facility to try and reduce the verbal weeds in the text, and this was really tedious too. I found I had overused words and phrases like: I know, I think, I found, perhaps, at least, of course, sometimes. I made a list of 30 of them, and a grid with a column for each chapter, and I went through rigorously weeding them out, or replacing them with better phrases. But I have another list of 20 possible word-weeds, which I'm planning on checking today before I print out the second draft.

In addition, I've spent some time trying to deal with the many notes that I made during the first draft stage, general points and more specific ones (for example, wanting a mention of the Zakat concept earlier in the book than chapter six; and wanting another mention of the author Julia Derwent). I did try to deal with these when I was correcting the chapters, but I found this too difficult and complicated, so I left many of them to the end, and have been dealing with them separately.

15 August

The heat wave has passed, but there is still no rain, and the sun continues to shine. This is the best August weather-wise I can recall. I move the water sprinkler around during the day, to water the shrubs and lawns. I am in this nether world of trying to tidy up Kip Fenn, which I find tiring and dull, and being unable to do anything else useful.

30 August

Kip Fenn is finished, finished, finished. I've worked my way through a final proof read and corrections. I'm sure I've made errors doing the corrections, but I can't proof read it again. I've got to call it a day. I mean it's a job for a copy editor now. If someone wants it, I might get motivated to clean it up some more at a later stage, but I can't do it now.