

My Somerset Life

A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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A truly remarkable day of sport – a tired Cheddar Car boot fair

I don't think we shall ever see the like of today, Sunday 14th of July, again. We had the epic men's singles final at Wimbledon, success in ladies netball, Lewis Hamilton winning the UK Formula One event and most of all the crazy thrill a minute 20-20 championship game of cricket between England and New Zealand which went beyond the last ball. I was trying to do other things but kept on being drawn back to the TV, Formula One, then the tennis, then the crazy cricket.



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as ever, gracious in defeat. He lost two match points. Both his sets of twins were there and he told the interviewer after the match that he wanted to forget this occasion and go back to being a father and husband. His wife seems to suffer during matches more than he does, almost biting her nails. She wore a dress that I suspect was not off-the-shelf, and a marriage ring which said to other men, "keep off, I am spoken for". Each player was very gracious and respectful about the other.

I love this about tennis. Everyone loves the game.

This morning, we went to the famous Cheddar car boot sale about which I have written many times. However, on this occasion, there were very few people around. When you have 160 tables you do need a fair amount of people to make it worthwhile for sellers to sell their wares effectively even though the average price of an item is about a pound or two.

I get the impression that a lot of people want to clean out their houses of unnecessary objects and offer pre-loved children's clothes to the next generation. In order to get a good position you have to arrive about six o'clock in the morning so by the time we arrived, about 10 o'clock, they had been standing around for four hours. On our arrival we witnessed more than one seller giving up for the day. I can understand because it was hot and sunny. Even our amazing meat stand had a desolate look as there were only two or three people standing around aimlessly.

I did see one very tired stand run by a chap who sells bedding plants but on this occasion they too were tired what with heat and so on. I can't imagine anyone would buy the plants exhibited below



and a look at the garden centre and my attention was drawn to original ways of using pallets.



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A local Fayre, tennis and more tennis



What a lovely unspoiled young lady from Romania, Simona Halep. She won the French Open and now she wins at Wimbledon. After the French Open she was received rapturously in her home country and she hopes the welcome this time will be as good as last time. Her mother said to her when she was very young, 'I would be impressed with you if you played in the final at Wimbledon'. The mother did not actually say that she should win but the daughter has proved her point.

We then had one of the most exciting men's doubles finals going to the fifth set and on a knife edge. It is a mystery why they closed the roof of the court when there was at least one hour of daylight to go. I'm so glad for Columbia who have won their first tennis medal of any colour. It will make such a difference to the country and a necessary rise in morale where the Americans are knocking on their doors in the way only Americans can.

To our local annual fair at Midsomer Norton. The layout and the events were pretty much like last time. A brass band, young gymnasts, play areas for the children, various local and worthy causes, vegetable judging, plants sale. I was actually feeling very tired so I left after about an hour.



A good day out for the locals but I was not in a space to enjoy it.

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A product is only as good as the service

From my local garden equipment and tool suppliers I know I pay a little bit more but I know I can go back to them and they will be there to fix the problem for me normally without charge if it is in the guarantee period. The same cannot be said of bargain items which you buy on the Internet. I'm sure they have some sort of arrangement but it's not personal and

may well involve sending the product back with all that entails.

I'm starting to believe now that energy medicine and frequency medicine is the answer to many of the body's needs especially with regard to pain. Everything is frequency. A countervailing frequency will enable the body to correct itself. Those of you of a certain age will be aware of radionics, and those younger people may know of the spooky-2 which like all energy machines of any merit was developed in Russia.

It is difficult to know in advance what you will require but very often an instruction book sold with the item is not adequate. If the sales literature is in English Chinese it is not difficult to tell, it may be that support is lacking. Whatever you are going to buy, look on YouTube for someone explaining how to use it. Youtube is so vast that almost anything that is made will have video support of some sort, if not the manufacturer then a user will have posted something.

I ordered a Chinese made telephone which arrived today. I could barely understand the instructions and why do they make the type so small. Anyway I have done my due diligence. The phone works, remembers numbers, has a little socket enabling me to record conversations, remembers the last 10 numbers I dialed, has noise cancelling headphones and cost me about £25. It runs off the power of the telephone systems. I don't need batteries which is rather nice. It's the old story, buyer beware. Oh I forgot there was no invoice or return address so that's why it's good to pay with PayPal because they give a guarantee of looking after you in case anything goes wrong

I'm looking out for some software preferably free software to make a clickable map for my 5G website so people can see what is going on in a particular country. I'm not going to invest the time unless I read positive reviews, unless I found a video that explains how to do it, and unless the creator's website is informative.

Back to tennis. So Roger Federer beat Rafael Nadal. It was a cracking good match with Pedro returning impossible balls.

This weekend, every little village on earth is having a fair, but here in Midsomer Norton we are having a day with bands and performances and competitions and so on.

Good news, the weather is fine.

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It's garden time

Painting inspiration this morning at Pengover Green wildflower meadow! Well, that's an lovely way to start the garden theme by giving you a link to click on. What comes to my mind is the glories of nature. It only lasts about 30 seconds.

The National Garden Scheme, a charitable project where people open their own private gardens for a few days per year. People come along and pay four pounds or five pounds and in return can wander around for an hour or so and be treated tea and cakes. This time we went to a place called Wellfield Barn which was one of these places that is so close and so far from civilisation in this case Wells. Virginia's husband had departed this planet a few years ago but she gamely continues to do charitable events, show people round, tells the story how the house went from nothing 22 years ago to a lovely garden. Until recently when she was unfortunate enough to break her leg she presided over concerts in the living room.

The atmosphere of this place was so convivial that you could take a group of complete strangers and in 15 minutes they would be talking like old friends. An enormous amount of love and caring went into the walls and you can tell it.

One of the other visitors had just returned from the Shetland Islands where he had spent two weeks with his wife. He decided the best way was to drive up to Aberdeen and take a 12 hour ferry. They visited in early June. I asked about the

mosquitoes and they said there were none probably due to the relatively inclement weather with associated wind.

Anyway, here are a few pictures to give some idea of what it was like with commentary where necessary. These are in no particular order.



A sunset view. In the middle of the picture you can just about see Glastonbury Tor



The lady of the house, with whom you do not trifle, holding forth about the history of the house



a lovely little bubbly pool powered by an electric pump. Very discreet.





two people deep in conversation



the main house, with skyscape

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If music be the food of love + Useless UK Home Office + Evangelism done right

*If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it; that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die.*

I know the first line but I haven't a clue why Duke Orsino should ask for an excess of it. (guess) Of course if you have too much the appetite will sicken and die. Maybe this is an attempt to deal with unrequited love, his aim being to stuff himself sick with his own passion. I'm not really into William Shakespeare.

However, back to the current world, to this date and time.

Shame on me, or should I say lack of discipline, I don't listen to as much good classical music as I should do. I read somewhere about the pianist – Eric Lu– who won the Leeds piano competition. I find the quality of his playing quite stunning and this is what I used to start my day.

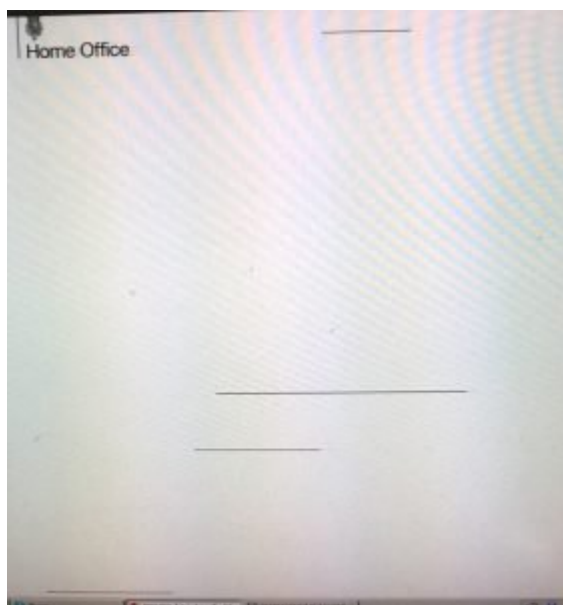
I find it interesting that music therapy has been examined for use in dealing with numerous medical conditions. All forms of music may have therapeutic effects, although music from our own culture may be most effective though not necessarily in my case. I love Indian music for example. **This is a lightweight but interesting article.**

Enjoy this Beethoven video.

Today, I met a new plot holder that I mentioned yesterday, Neil. He turned out to be a widower of about 65 years of age accompanied by two dogs, Polly and Mary Kate. His wife died a couple of years ago and he thought he had overcome his loss

but suddenly, strong emotions came back to him unexpectedly and he found the episode difficult to deal with. He decided to be proactive and go to a local college to attend a so-called "mindfulness day". I have no idea what the detail was but his plan gave him the courage and the means to move on. I commented that emotions come when you're ready to handle them and he agreed with that.

He says that having an allotment plot would enable a change in his life because he could get out more. His home is about 100 m away from the allotments themselves so this is absolutely ideal. I got a good feeling from him when I spoke to him on the phone. As my South African friend would say "he's got something to bring to the party". He starts working the plot on Saturday. Job done.



The UK Home Office are completely and utterly useless. My wife who has a French passport applied for indefinite leave to remain (ILR) and today she received the reply.

This is the PDF version of the letter. The only problem is that there is no visible text. Fortunately I immediately recognised the problem – that some incompetent had set the text colour to white. I did Ctrl + C, and copy and pasted the

invisible text, chose black and we could then read it. Francoise has received permission. I guess hundreds of applicants must have received this and have been utterly confused. Surprise surprise there is no phone number to find out since it all has to be done by e-mail. As we say, the Home Office couldn't even organise a piss up in a brewery. Thank goodness I don't have much to do with them. I guess that the average pay there is quite low so as they say 'if you pay peanuts you get monkeys'. I'm sure there is some political incorrectness in that statement but quite frankly I don't care.

In last Sunday's diary I wrote about my visit to an exhibition tent run by a group of churches in Keynsham at the culmination of the local music week. I was invited to come to a talk aided "Free barbecue life story" at the Crown Inn. Someone called Tim was going to speak. He was brought up an atheist. Since I was so impressed by the atmosphere of the tent I thought I would come along and give it a go. I turned up and somehow found my way into a garden behind The Crown Inn and saw a group of people milling around and chatting away. A cold barbecue was set out. I didn't know a soul but I felt at home so that didn't really matter. In my experience it's only a matter of time before you start chatting to someone and on this occasion this proved to be the case.

I went back into the main bar to get myself a coffee. I got the impression that the lady behind the bar, one and a certain age, was not quite with it. I stood for a couple of minutes waiting to be served. She looked around from what she was doing and jumped as if I was an intruder. I asked for a coffee and asked what type. She said "what do you mean?". I said filter. She replied "it has gone cold". The conversation stalled at that point. She said brightly as an afterthought "I could make you another". She put some copy in the filter and poured a full measure of water into the machine. I guess it

would take some time. It did indeed. She said "would you like some milk?". I replied in the affirmative. She shuffled off down a long passage and reappeared 2 min later with a 2L bottle of milk which she gave to me. "You can help yourself" she said. As a bonus, I got two packets of brown sugar.

Meanwhile, the manager placed a cup and saucer on the bar with a little packet of three biscuits. I declined the biscuits. She noticed and said "you don't want them then". I wanted to explain that biscuits didn't quite go with a barbecue but felt that I would be wasting my breath. Keynsham is a funny 'in between place' it's not city, it's not town, it's not a village. I don't know what it is really. In a way, the fact the staff have not been trained reflects this. There was a feeling of "make it up as you go along". It was not unpleasant, just a bit chaotic.

But anyway, back to the main part of my story.

I met two bikers. The first one was named K.J. who was much adorned with silver rings on all his fingers, who said fairly early on in the conversation that he had Asperger's syndrome and OCD. Asperger's is characterised by significant difficulties in social interaction and non-verbal communication, along with restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour and interests. He said more than once that he could not understand sarcastic humour. I in my turn did not understand why he did not.

OCD is obsessive/compulsive disorder. I admitted that I had OCD in a very minor form and we were amazed to find what we had in common. We both hated being late for something and feel that if someone has agreed to turn up on time they should do so. His flat was a model of tidiness, and had 250 model cars on display, all arranged in a tidy configuration plus models including boats but I forgot the details of. His kitchen at home is immaculate. Every morning he gets up at about 3 AM. Quite what he does at those times we did not establish but it

matters not.

He and I both have a habit of sitting at the back of church at services normally in the same place because we want to feel there is an escape route if things go wrong. Interestingly, he has done a lot of good deeds for a lot of people for which it requires no thanks and effect is embarrassed to be thanked. He told me he had done this since the age of 14. I admitted that I liked things to be orderly and when I crossed the street, I had to walk across in even numbers of steps. I could not say what happened if that did not happen because I never let it happen. We both agreed that is very nice to meet a fellow OCD person because you don't have to explain. I said that if you accept the impediment that say it turns into a characteristic or a feature and is not a problem.

Amazingly, to my left, sat a chap called Richard, also 75, also with wet macular disease. Who says like doesn't attract like. These two 'speople have been bikers all their lives and could talk indefinitely about bikes so I had to struggle to getting the word edgeways. I did not mind this at all.

I then saw what I consider to be the ideal style of evangelism which is not evangelism but a personal testimony. Tim was an atheist with atheist parents one of whom was a scientist and the other I can't remember but they most definitely did not believe in God and nor did he for the first 24 years of his life. He then met a group of people who were 'different' and eventually found himself speaking to God in his head, how ironic for someone who does not believe in God at all. Here is a flavour of part of his talk. You may have to turn your speakers up because the sound level is a bit low.

I was attracted to him because he started by saying that he didn't want to give an evangelical talk, but just wanted to chat about his experience. In other words he was giving a testimony. I love testimonies because they don't put any

pressure on you at all, take it or leave it, relate to it or not.

He is an IT consultant. He told me afterwards that his boss calls him in once a week for a chat which can often last one and a half hours. He told me that for the first two or 3 minutes they talk about work and then he spends the rest of the time answering questions from his boss about God. That is most impressive if you're the sort of person that people can open up to especially your superiors at work. The boss must have a tremendous respect for Tim to do this.

I remember, when I was but a teenager my job was to clean the brass in the church of which my father was a vicar. There was a small plaque in the pulpit which said "Sir, we would see Jesus". To be an effective testimony giver you have to keep yourself out of the way and just be a vehicle, unspoken if you will, of another level of existence – that level is one of faith and belief. Too many preachers are full of themselves and their own ego I'm sorry to say and when people lose their ordinariness I lose interest in them.

I have a chat with Tim after his talk wondering if he could help with one of my websites. I will only work on a project with people who are on my wavelength. Tim recommended a friend who was a street pastor working in Bristol's I shall give him a call and see what happens. If you try and work with someone who doesn't know what you are doing and why you are doing it, it is so much more difficult and time-consuming as I have learned to my cost but hey that's the normal way of learning.

I chatted to KJ and Richard after the talk and said that you never know when an opportunity for sharing your beliefs is going to come up. One of the reasons I do not listen to music on headphones when I walk along the street is that it makes me less aware of what is going on and you never know, a brief "good morning" maybe the very thing that will make a difference to somebody's day. To me that is worth a lot. I

enjoy putting myself second and others more in focus.

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