

My Somerset Life

A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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A perfect day

Just occasionally things conspire together to make a day as near perfect as I could hope for. We were supposed to pick up our hire car yesterday Monday in order to have our beloved older Volvo repaired. The previous user of the courtesy car had not appeared at the garage until late last night, so we had to go today.

As it happened the weather was warm(ish) for the time of year and the skies were clear. We avoided driving to Chippenham via Bath and went by the highways and byways, stopping off at Frome. We did our shopping at Lidl, then went to order some paint from B and Q. The paint is made to our specification, one out of 2.4 million colours. The server, Nigel, was one of the old fashioned types who gave service. We ordered a trial tin of paint for £4 so we could see that the colour was exactly right. He painted an area on card and blow dried it for us to approve. The 2.5 litre product was around £30 but it seemed worth every penny due to its resilience to abuse (children and animals).

I popped in to Frome station wanting to use the loo. For some reason you have to ask for a key from the booking office. That's impossible when the office is unmanned which is most of the time. I noticed trains to Worcester and to Weymouth. We could try that one day.

We then went to ASDA, filled up with cheap petrol, then went round the store. Always something to tempt the eye. I had a chicken breast for 99p. It was a great filler up for lunch.

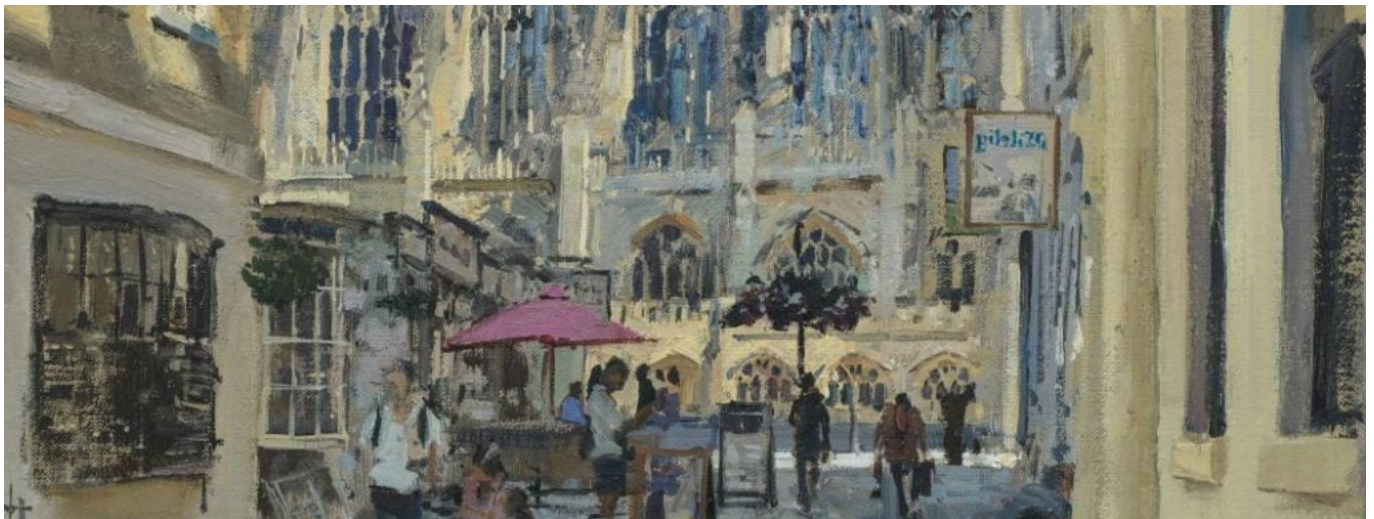
Off we went to the Volvo store. I arrived at 12.04 having said I would arrive by 12.00. Chris Fortt the service manager teased me. We have built up a great relationship during the last months and I look forward to going.

We were introduced to our new Volvo courtesy car. It was half

way between my old 2003 volvo and the space age cars that we see these days. There is no need for a car key to start the engine. You press down the clutch and press the start/stop button and there you go. The drive was very smooth. It used 29 mpg as opposed to 23 mpg for my old Volvo but then it is only 1600 cc's.

We drove to Bath for Françoise to pick up her French ID card. The Francis hotel where the French consulaire has meetings is a lovely traditional establishment that does afternoon tea. The rates are quite reasonable for a snobby place like Bath (£119 p.n. excluding breakfast but rates vary).

Off to the Victoria Art Gallery where there was an exhibition of work by Peter Brown: Bath, City and Beyond. This is a prolific artist who paints works at one sitting.



They were so realistic I almost felt I could walk in to the street scenes. Particularly brilliant were the wet pavements and sidewalks. The whole was uplifting. It is clear that this artist only has one style but he is very good at it.

We then went to have a glass of mulled wine at a restaurant just by the Cathedral followed by a visit to Morrison's where I bought a small salad buffet for £3.25. That was quite a filler. Amazing how much you can stuff into a plastic container.

Night was falling and we took the park and ride bus to Odd

Down where we had parked our car. The evening sky was a spectacular red surrounded by dark clouds. It reminded me of the gateway to hell or what I imagine to be such a thing. But it was beautiful as well.

Back home for a glass of bubbly and a light meal. Watched the football Portugal vs Switzerland. 5:1 and a great Ronaldo support act.

We enjoyed speaking to many people. I love bringing a smile to the face of a stranger. I have become more bold as I realize that people actually like to be talked to but you have to have the right motive otherwise they will feel uneasy. It is easier when I am with my wife but when I am alone I can still achieve a positive result (people being willing to engage with me).

I actually managed to relax and forget the serious things of the world. Of course they run in the background.

Telegram have changed their rules and my Covid material, as they are republishing and containing images have been blocked. No asking. They just do it. Money exchanges hands, or it it a threat, or what. We shall never know.

And so to bed.

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