

My Somerset Life

A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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The land that time forgot + a lost child + a new shop

[tta_listen_btn]

Today, talk on the news of an Indian summer, and indeed the weather looks very promising. I was drinking my coffee at about 8:30 this morning when the mobile phone rang with an unusual prefix, +64

Someone was calling on WhatsApp and I forgot that this service is free of charge. Why anyone pays for using the phone I don't know. I know that in the United Kingdom they are going to phase out landlines in 2025 such is the advance of technology. Anyway it was a previous client, who I had helped, from New Zealand. He had to decide whether to make a particular foreign trip and obviously needed help straight away so I arranged to talk to him this morning for an hour. The art of counseling is to do just that, to listen and to speak. In this case it was more like coaching where I asked him what his alternatives were and how he saw his position both in his home country of New Zealand and in the proposed country of visiting, Germany. He planned to do some study there at some point.

Every action is a balanced risk (even getting out of the bath).

It was very nice to be able to respond to someone who called 'out of the blue' and give them immediate service. When people are ready to hear something they are really ready and open and it is a pleasure to work in this way.

On a technical point, we were using Skype. The quality of his speech left something to be desired. It broke up. If this happens to you, get them to turn off their video thus saving bandwidth and you will find the quality of the speech increases

Somerset Fine Foods

It is not every day that a new shop opens in our local town, Midsomer Norton, but this one I think is destined to succeed. It has a lovely stone floor which must be at least a couple of hundred years old and this gives authenticity in a strange

way. They have a very good delicatessen and a small meat counter, a large section of take away frozen foods for convenience, and another section stocking items that you would not find in the average supermarket. They cook and freeze the food themselves and only use local meat farms/producers. I think they will do well because they are advertised well on social media and I had to wait to get served. They can be thankful they were not on the other side of the street because they wouldn't get the footfall. I wish them all the best. I saw some coffee beans from the Himalayas that I had been searching for and there it was at a reasonable price.



Radford Mill Harvest Festival



A truck that has seen better days. Nature is gradually swallowing it up and claiming it for herself.



Radford Mill is quite unusual in Somerset. The 100 acre plus land is a hilly area which does not lend itself to cultivation. It was occupied by an old watermill. If you go there it is quite easy to think that this is the 1800s. They have festivals, fayres, camping, fresh produce for sale, and so far as I'm concerned it is a bonus that there is very little mobile phone signal.

We arrived about ten thirty in the morning. There were about 80 people. When we left, there were about 200 all enjoying themselves. I got the impression that these were very local people who perhaps did not have a car and could take advantage of a free event to spoil their children, perhaps give them a pony ride, and generally relate to nature.



ecology conscious movement with plenty of bins for rubbish. I purchased some cider, one pint between us, and had to pay a deposit of one pound for the glass. We got the pound back when we returned the empty glass. The cost of this cider was £3 for a half and £5.50 for a pint. It tasted very good, more like a food than a drink and was very satisfying so I had no desire to have another one.



Francoise decided to take advantage of the vegetarian food. There was a combination of Carrots, beans, lentils, pumpkins, with some bread. The cost was £8 and the portions were generous.

Radford Mill

Radford Mill Farm is an Organic Farm.

What is ORGANIC?

"In a nutshell, organic is food as it should be, made by working with nature, using real ingredients, with animals free to forage and graze on land that's home to more wildlife.

It's also a fully traceable system of producing food that is governed by legal standards and subject to statutory control." (See goorganicuk.com)

Organic foods are grown without artificial pesticides or fertilizers and organically reared animals and birds are not subjected to routine use of chemicals. They live happy, healthy lives, outdoors most of the time with extensive indoor shelter and protection when they need it.

Our regulatory body is the Organic Farmers and Growers association (OF&G) who inspect annually to ensure we comply with the high standards of organic production.

Save the planet – choose local organic !

There were many stalls, some selling clothes, some works of art, selling pottery, some selling food (not many actually) and a wood turner with whom I had something in common though I didn't know it. He had had a similar eye operation, a cataract, to mine but in both eyes and said that a couple of years later his eye became cloudy and the hospital told him that he would need to have laser treatment. Evidently this resulted in his eyes becoming immediately clearer. This was useful information as when I have my examination in a couple of week's time I will know to ask about it



This one was selling cakes and I thought that the price was a little bit high, £4.50 for a small cake is a little bit over the top so I passed on that one. I do not doubt that the quality was good but to pay such money for a few mouthfuls was, I thought, a bit out of place since the price was the same as many quality London establishments, in addition to being rather lean.

A lost child

We saw a scenario where a lost child who must have been about five years of age was panicking and crying because she had lost her parents. At that age they are very dependent and I saw the terrified look in her eyes where her main sources of security have disappeared. Fortunately, a member of staff

rescued her and shouted around until the parents came forward. When they did so she desperately clung to them. I remember when I had been lost at the age of three and the damage that can be done in a few seconds is quite extraordinary. As an adult I do not like it when I'm going out with someone and I cannot find them easily. ' they must be somewhere around'.



Just adjacent to the area was the mill itself and a very pleasant garden. You could hear the trickling of the water along the small stream which obviously in its day was far bigger.



There is quite a lot of vegetable growing behind the scenes

and there were six large polytunnels like this with, surprisingly, seedlings being sown. I could not see what they were, perhaps some sort of winter cabbage but also winter lettuce.

Anyway the whole was in good condition and this would suit the lifestyle of a certain sort of itinerant person very well.



There was obviously a lot being done by different types of people applying their various skills. This was a large industrial saw designed to make planks of wood. By them were treat trunks of considerable girth waiting for attention.

I saw a half completed shed with lengths of wood lying around. Who knows if someone is going to do something soon or is it on someone's to do list perhaps. I also saw a treehouse which someone must have thought a good idea at some time but for some reason it was abandoned, and the final connecting step between it and the ground was missing. I did think of insurance problems in case anyone should fall

To my surprise, we found some blackberries which we ate with great relish. I thought the season had passed but my feeling in this very specific micro climate is that the normal timing rules do not apply. If you want to look out for events At Radford Mill Farm then check out Facebook.

https://www.facebook.com/RadfordMillFarm/?locale=en_GB

What a lovely afternoon. It really was warm. We decided 'off the cuff' to go to Swansea for a couple of days. We found an hotel for two nights for £160 including breakfast. That, my

friends, is good value these days.

PS – By the way I forgot the hotel in question which is the Holiday Inn Express just by the motorway near Swansea. I had caused to ring them to ask them if there was a bus service to the center of Swansea in case we didn't feel like bringing the car.

You know straight away if someone is bright or not and guy who answered the phone was really on the case. I inquired about the bus number and he said he didn't have it but he would call me back on the number that he could see was mine.

He did indeed call 'in a couple of minutes' as he promised and told me the bus number which was 38 and it ran once an hour from Neath to Swansea so I joked that both he and I had learnt something. It was only then that I was moved to book the hotel. If I had had a negative experience I would probably have looked round for something else. We are a fickle lot aren't we.

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