

My Somerset Life

A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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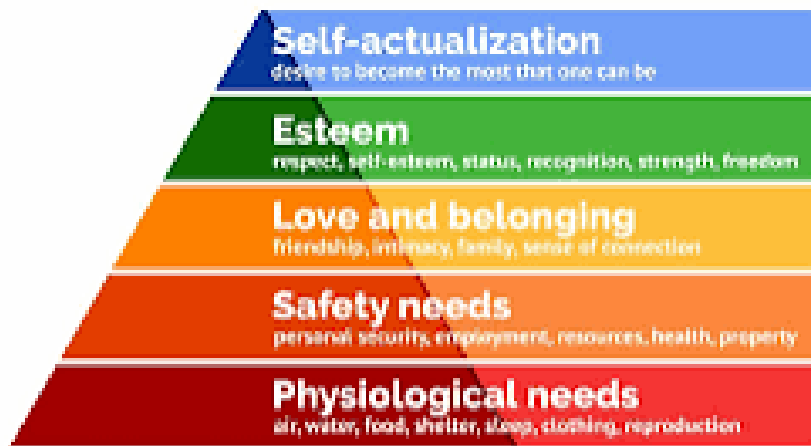
Swansea Trip – Day one – swimming in an Olympic 50m Pool

For our sudden brief holiday we arose on Sunday morning at 7:30 and by 9.30 we were in the car off to Swansea in South Wales. This is a part of the world that we have taken a particular liking to. We have been to Cardiff about three times and have found a considerable amount of investment in public arts and works of art. We decided to go to Swansea on the recommendation of a friend who said it was a much transformed place.



Whilst en route – things pop into my mind ‘from nowhere’ and I was given cause to think about evangelists and particularly people who ask people if they ‘know Jesus’. I am not one to do this. Maybe a justification for

cowardice on my part but I do feel that such questions asked to strangers or indeed friends is somewhat capricious and inappropriate. I find that most people that I meet have their own set of problems and I’m thinking of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The first need is for food and shelter and until that is dealt with, the idea of who you have given your life to is but a dim and distant dream.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

I do a lot of talking with people in the street. I try to bring sunshine to the lives of as many people I as I can in as many ways as I can for example through telling jokes, by asking people how they are, and generally lightening their day if I possibly can. When the conversation makes it appropriate I think it is within protocol to ask people what they think about certain things for example 'what do you think about how the world is going?' I think you should always ask questions and not tell people or imply that people are deficient in some way because of their lack of faith. Jesus led by example but also waited for people to come to him with concerns.

I don't think you're going to get people saying '*I have messed my life up, I have not heard about Jesus or if I have it was a long time ago and I will now change my ways and follow him*'. I think the first and foremost duty we have is to listen to people and wherever they are to join them in their journey. Let's face it, if the spirit of God dwells within us, there will be a prompting to do or say something when the time is right.

First impressions

I am in Wales. I know this because of the sign. A break for coffee in a motorway service station. Why are Welsh words so long? My brother Martin speaks Welsh fluently. Well, he had to as a vicar in order to preach.



We arrived fairly early around 11:30 and made straight for the Mumbles which is the headland to the southwest of Swansea. I would rather have checked in to our hotel first but we could not do so until 3pm. It was here that we first discovered that wherever you're trying to park, you have to pay. The local council has the whole thing staked out. No one escapes.

I hate parking ticket machines

One of my hobby horses is these dreadful instruments created by sadists called parking payment machines. The number of times I have seen otherwise intelligent people completely stumped, not knowing what to do, almost hitting the machine in frustration.



First, it is very difficult to see the screen particularly if it is facing the sun. You almost need to find a black cloth to cover your head like they did in the old days of photography. Sometimes you have to put the car registration number in. When you do so it is not clear how to confirm that the number is correct. There are all sorts of buttons and correct signs and arrows but which one to press? You may or may not be told. Then you try and put some money in, typically a pound. The machine spits it out in disgust. You try to put it in again. Sometimes it works and on a good day it will grudgingly accept your money. Some give change, some do not. If you are asked for £2.30 and you only have three pound coins do you write off the 70p or expect change.

When through sheer luck the ticket is finally printed and appears, it often gets tangled up somewhere in the machine and you have to fish around to get it out of the plastic container that it has embedded itself in. I have spent up to 10 minutes trying to work the damn things out. I hate them.

Mumbles Pier



Mumbles lighthouse, to see seen from the land. Not much pier to see. Most of it is in dis-repair. The buildings consist of a very loud amusement arcade. Goodness knows what the electricity bill is, and a restaurant. Someone had made a gallant attempt at humour. Its not very funny as there is no pier.



Great view from the restaurant, terrible dish

The Lighthouse bar and kitchen was a sprawling edifice overlooking the sea and many people were eating or just

enjoying themselves over a coffee in the sun. We decided to eat as it was just after midday and we ordered a basic Pizza. The cost was about £12.50 when it's came common my goodness what a disappointment. There was hardly anything there apart from a 12 inch pizza shape. Eating it was like chewing cardboard.

I estimate there was about 10 pence worth of tomato sauce or whatever they use and a very thin layer of cheese, about 30 pence worth on a good day. I still think of pizzas in American terms when the filling is about half an inch thick. Had I not been so numbed from the travel I would have sent it back but it's not the sort of thing you want to do as your first act in a new country. Well, Wales is a new country in a way. Ah well it's something to fill the stomach I suppose.

No doubt you could spend most of the day here so we did a quick pop up the hill to find remnants of military buildings and a lovely view where in spite of the mist we could still see the coast of Somerset. We were to have many chats with those we met and a couple with their dog at the top of the hill did not disappoint. They had lived in the area all their life and were not short of information on local matters.

Clyne Gardens

Basically there is one main road that goes along the coast so Clyne Gardens is like most places, not difficult to find. We were in for a treat and I strongly recommend this area planned over a century ago full of the most wonderful resplendent trees. It is worth jumping on a bus from the center. Website [here](#).



Cupressus macrocarpa
(Cypreswydden Monterey - Monterey Cypress)

Tarddiad
O Monterey yng Nghalfforinia.

Nodweddion
Mae gan y goedden hon ddol gydag aragl ierwau. Mae'n hysbysu yn eiddoedd yn eiddoedd hollt. Mae'r goedden yn cynhyrchu conau bach effrig a gall dyfu hyd i 60 centimetr yn y flwyddyn gyntaf.

Fel rhiant y Cypreswydden Leyland, rhoddodd y Cypreswydden Monterey grym i'r Leyland. Yn ychwanegol, mae eiddoedd Cypreswydden Monterey yn tyfu'n well yn y DU na gartref yng Nghalfforinia. Digwydd hyn oherwydd yng nghlwm gwlad mae'n tyfu mewn ardaloedd agored iawn, sy'n cael eu taw gan wyntoedd y Pasffig.

Defnyddiau
Fel gwrych ac fel atafu gwynn yn eiddoedd mewn ardaloedd glan môr.

Hanes
Cyflwynwyd y goedden i Brithain tua 1838 ac yn ddiweddarach i'r gorddi gan Graham Vivian yn 1860.

Cylchfeur: 678cm
(Cylchfeur mwyaf yng Ngorddi Clun)
Uchder: 28 metr

Rhoddwyd y plan hwn gan Gyfeillion Cynabry Bannogol Dinas Abertawe a Chyfeillion Gorrddi Clun

Plaenau donatd by the Friends of the City of Swansea Botanical Complex and the Friends of Clyne Gardens.



Origin
From Monterey in California.

Features
This tree has lemon-scented foliage. Crush a leaf in your hand and smell it! The tree produces small, spherical cones and can grow up to 60cm in its first year.

As a parent of the Leyland Cypress, the Monterey Cypress gave the Leyland its vigour. In addition, Monterey Cypress trees generally grow better in the UK than at home in California. This is because in the wild they grow in very exposed areas, which are blasted by Pacific winds.

Uses
Hedging and as wind breaks particularly in sea front areas.

History
First introduced into Britain at around 1838 and later into the Gardens by Graham Vivian in 1860.

Girth measurement: 678cm
(This tree has the largest girth in Clyne Gardens)
Height measurement: 28 metres











Whilst wandering around I saw a tent and thinking it might be a pop-up tea room went along to have a look. In fact it was a demonstration area to celebrate mushrooms – of all things. I took so many pictures as I was fascinated, once more, about the many varieties of fungi.



A chance to get up close and personal. A hands on approach was encouraged. The curator was enthusiastic and well informed.

MYCORRHIZAL FUNGI



ORANGE GRISETTE
Aranta omata



CEP or PENNY BUN
Boletus edulis



FLEECY MILKCAP
Lactaria velutina



MOBCAP
Corthorax cetraceocephalus



FLY AGARIC
Amanita muscaria



COLUMBAR LYCOP
Corthorax columbarum



ASHEN KNIGHT
Tricholoma equestre



LURID BOLETE
Sinclairia lurida



BROWN BETA BOLETE
Lactarius stipitatus



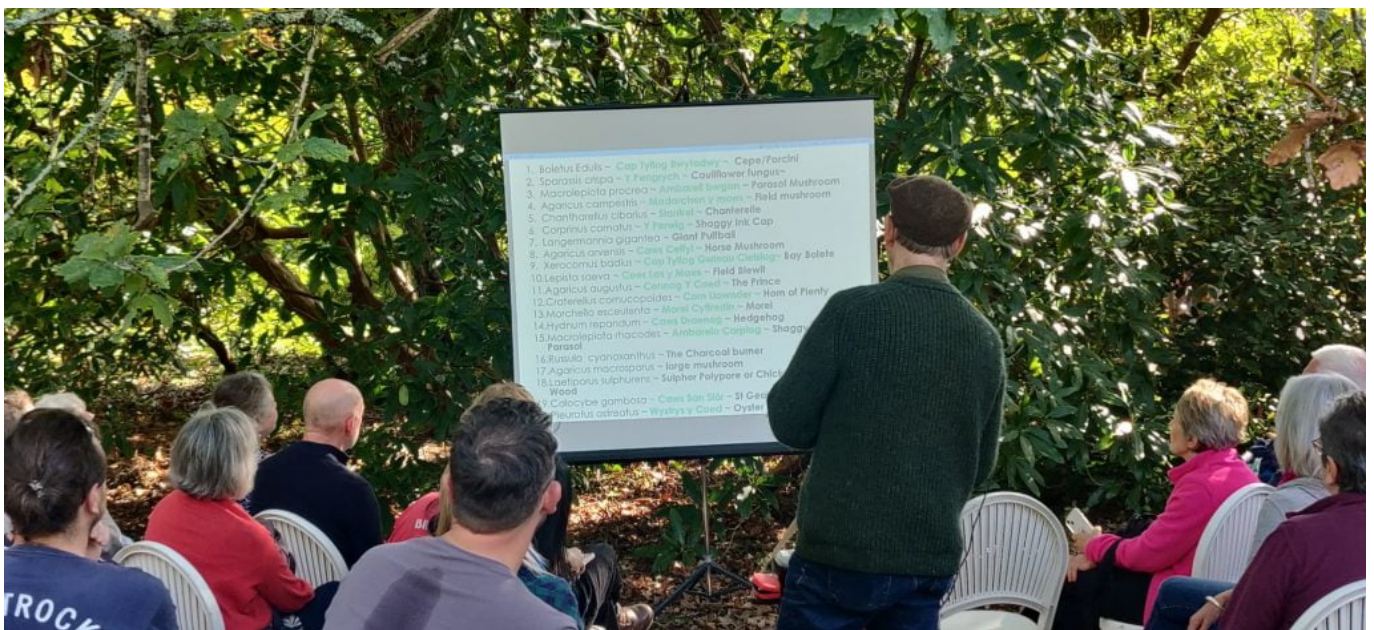
GIANT GILL
Lactarius controversus



TERRACOTTA INKING
Hydnum rubicundum



AMETHYST DECEIVER
Lactaria amethystina



I was directed to a glade of trees to find a very respectable group of people being given a lecture on all aspects of mushrooms, gathering, seeking out, poisonous vs non poisonous etc. He was called Phil Roberts and held everyone's attention for 20 minutes or so before taking his group on a conducted walk to discover further specimens.

We decided to move on, promising ourselves to return at some future date. We were very lucky with the weather and only if it is bright and fresh and sunny will we return again this

year.

I felt that before checking in we needed to do something else but I wasn't quite sure what it was.

We continued our drive along the main drag and I noticed on the left a sign post to a swimming pool and realize that we had chanced on one of two pools in Wales that is up to Olympic standards. This was an opportunity for Francoise to engage in her love of swimming. As she was over 60 there was no charge, no paperwork, and she just walked into the changing rooms with her one pound refundable coin to put her clothes in the locker.

She had a 50m Olympic lane to herself and had a wonderful time going up and down in water that did not stink of chlorine – a reason for not wanting to go to our local pool.

I had a coffee and wandered about waiting for her to finish. During this time I took a picture of the pool but was reprimanded gently by the person on the desk who almost apologetically asked me to delete the shot due to safeguarding issues. I know they have to say this sort of thing so in this case I use my discretion as there was no identifiable person in the photograph.

Whilst waiting I came across a magazine excitingly titled SA2 Health. I flicked through finding mostly advertisements which of course helps to pay for the publication. However, my eye did settle on a very interesting article by Dr Charlotte Jones. It was entitled '*Speeding*' – *all the furor around the speeding limit changes give the perfect theme for this edition's article.*

Ladies and gentlemen, do you know the difference between tachycardia, tachysenseia, and tachophobia? Well I didn't.

tachycardia is a term used to describe when the heart is speeding or going fast there are many causes including lifestyle and eating factors anxiety or stress, heart conditions or the side effects of some medications

Tachysensia is a more interesting one to me, this is a rare

condition where a person has a distorted view of time and feels everything is moving fast for example time or sound or people. Episodes can be quite unsettling but usually last less than 10 to 20 minutes. This can be addressed by using relaxation techniques

Tachyphobia or taking part in fast moving activities for example roller coasters. In severe cases that can lead to a person not leaving their home. It is felt too often be linked to past traumas related to what they are fearful of and even though most sufferers know it is irrational but they cannot control it.

While I was drinking my coffee I overheard a member of staff talking to two other people, also staffers, about various matters that he wanted resolved both personally and in connection with work. I was very impressed with his demeanor. Although the subjects were difficult and required resolution with certain people, his voice was very calm and objective like it was explaining something that had happened to somebody else.

I was very impressed with him and after the two visitors had left I went up to him and said that although I did not hear the detail of what they were talking about I thought his attitude, being neutral and objective, was one that I could learn from and he concurred that neutrality was the best position. He was not upset by my intervention.

I certainly think that we save ourselves a lot of energy by not taking things that people say or do personally.



Check in at the Hotel

On to the hotel which basically means going back to the M4 motorway and turn left. I have described the hotel at length in my Tuesday diary entry. It was great to unpack, put everything in order as is my wont and enjoy doing nothing. I took the opportunity to start reading David Icke's latest book – where does he find the time – called The Dream. He talks a lot about wokeness and the change in people's psychology which in my view is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand what is going on

We took an early meal at the adjacent restaurant and decided to share one portion as I was not very hungry. We had good old fish and chips preceded by a starter and we helped ourselves to the free salad which alas did not include greens. I had some of the excellent local beer, Brains was the trading name, which we consumed prior to eating.

A very good first day, and I'm so glad we took the opportunity and got up early for what is let's face it not a very long journey, one hour 59 minutes according to Google.

Swansea Day one

Swansea Day two

Swansea day three

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