

# My Somerset Life

## A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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# Swansea – Day 2 – museums markets and wind farms

[tta\_listen\_btn]

We took a bus somewhat after 10 o'clock in the morning, the X7, and alighted at the central bus garage which is really posh and well designed for large numbers of vehicles arriving and departing. Well done architects. The cost for a day ticket is £4.70. Warning – Free bus passes issued in England do not work in Wales.

Museums a-plenty can be found in the area to the sea side of the town divided by the main through route. It is a pity the road is there in a (the) way as the museums are separated from the town as such but never mind.



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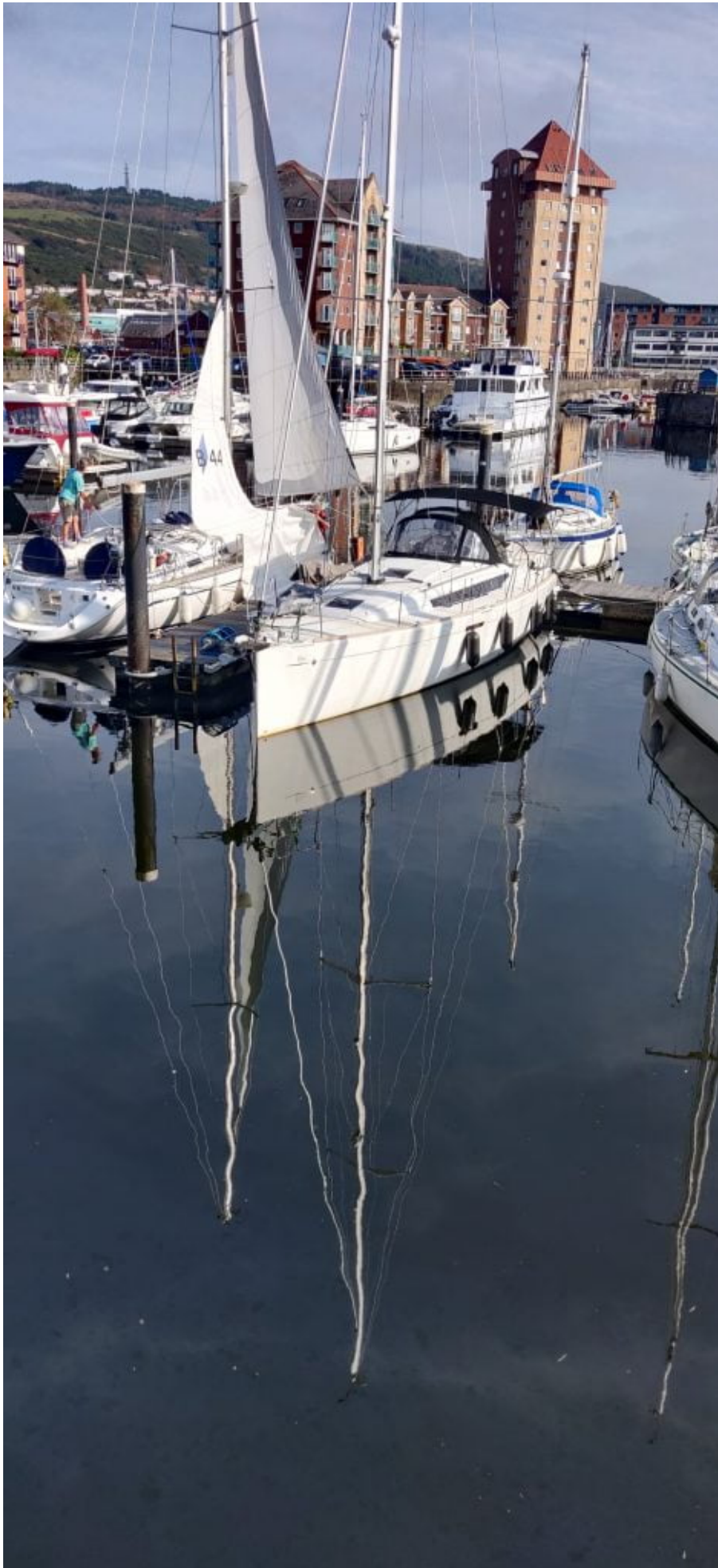
the bus station we visited the National Waterfront Museum. Just to be doubly sure where we are here is the national symbol, a dragon. It is physically very large, on two floors. The variety of items and themes is too great to even list here so I suggest you visit the website for a better view. The staff are helpful.



The picture shows the view from the upstairs window of an area that used to be used for docking bananas and for distribution throughout the United Kingdom.



Interestingly in the grounds outside the museum there were some allotments with 10 raised beds. The descriptive text read 'raised beds are a simple way of transforming space dash especially where there is little soil depth, or where contamination and heavy industry have left their mark. They also provide multi-level access for people. These raised beds contain over 40 tons of topsoil, mixed with manure and sand'



The day was still with very little wind so we got a reflection in the water of the many boats parked – or moored should I say.

## A hidden Gem

We had a wander around the very well designed housing estate which abutted the sea front and in front of the old Harbour. We noticed a tiny little shop, you could call it quirky, and I was immediately attracted to it. When I got back home to Somerset I rang the lady concerned, Kelly, an American, and I discovered that Francoise does the same type of work – though not with old books. Kelly has a wonderful channel on YouTube and Francoise and I watched a video. Next time we go to Swansea we shall definitely visit her. What an absolute gem and what a delight. See below





Website: <https://bookandpaperarts.com/about/>

One of the videos from her channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LbV0suHCFqw>

**And now to the market, which claims to be the biggest one in Wales.**

Markets are very personal 'individual' places and people go there regularly to shop and out of loyalty to the seller. I don't think any description is adequate and I hope some of the images that I took will convey something of the charm and the variety of the stalls. I don't think 'stalls' is the right

word but I can't think of a better one. It is so lovely to see stall after stall of fresh fish and fresh meat and fresh vegetables not to mention various types of bread. I could have spent £100 there without any difficulty, the problem is that we had no cold place to store the food on our journey home.

# Croeso i farchnad

## Swansea Market and Cockles

Cockles are one of Swansea's most celebrated food exports.

Traditionally gathered by women, these small molluscs have been harvested in Swansea and Gower since Roman times.

For centuries, Gower cockles (from the Burry Estuary) have been sold at markets in Swansea by women who walked from the coast to the city centre carrying their wares.

The most common depiction of the traditional 19 century cockle picker shows them wearing Welsh flannels, shawl and apron. The flatter, distinctive 'cockle bonnet', as opposed to a tall hat, allowed the pickers to carry heavy baskets on their heads.

The Cockle Industry in the Burry Inlet is still an important part of the local economy and remains one of the key industries in North Gower.

Although cockles can be bought all over the UK, Swansea Market remains one of the most popular places to buy them. The shellfish stalls in the centre of the market have been modernised and refrigerated in order to meet today's food hygiene standards and many visitors travel here to sample this local delicacy.



### Did you know?

- In the year 2000, the Burry Estuary was accredited as a sustainable fishery by the Marine Stewardship Council
- Gower cockles are exported to Holland, Spain, France and Portugal where they are canned and distributed to far flung corners of the globe
- The Cockle Industry in the Burry Estuary is one of the very few which hasn't been fully mechanised, as a result the meats are sweet and grit free



CITY AND COUNTY OF

Images supplied by West Glamorgan Archive Service - Gŵylfa









## A journey to some wind farms.

We had enough at this point so we went to the bus station, again I say what a lovely work of art, and we decided to go home and then set off into the hillside to see what we could find. We went west along the M4 for a bit and then turned to the right where some hills beckoned. We found ourselves at a high point. The view would have been even more spectacular had there been a lack of mist which was already coming down although it was only 4 o'clock in the afternoon.





All these towers are connected together and to the grid. This is a map of the whole. In the distance were other groups of towers.



It is difficult to describe how big these masts are. If you look at this picture, at the bottom you will see a tiny figure. This is Francoise. You have to stand underneath it to understand its sheer size.

## **Home Jeeves**

To the hotel and then to the Harvester restaurant, another half a pint each of delightful beer. We ate some food at the hotel. We had incessant news from the BBC on Israel and Hamas which I had had enough of. What about this event reminds me of 9/11?

At another table in the hotel restaurant / bar there were two muscular men, obviously rugby players, and I commented to them that they were two types of men in Wales. Rugby players and fans, and others. Thank goodness they found that quite funny.

We repaired to our room. The television did not go on and we spent the time either dozing or reading. That was a very full day.

Swansea Day one

Swansea Day two

Swansea day three

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