

My Somerset Life

A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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Clocks back- Sunny Sunday morning

Times they are a changing

Courtesy of the change to our time to GMT we were 'gifted' with an extra hour in bed this morning. I always go through a mild existential questioning when I ask if the clock has gone backwards or forwards. Of course we will pay for it this evening but I think that's livable with.

Why I write my diary, nth iteration

I've decided to mention on a regular basis the significant videos that I watch just for my own records to remind myself what has been an impact for me. Here is one that will introduce a topic which we can call Exopolitics that is all about other life forms indeed other humanity that exists apart from our planet Earth or Terra as it is called.

I'm going to throw you in the deep end and you can follow up if it is within your will and interest to do so. *The Jupiter Hub, Moon, Medbeds, Ukraine & Israel/Palestine – A Conversation with Thor Han Eredyon*

I must do some more research on the motives of the diarists who have kept a record of their daily activities and thoughts. I wonder if my motive falls in line with theirs. My motive is to give a living and accurate picture of what it is like to be me, a human being in this age of war, lies and deceit. I write about the ups and downs, the doubts, the experiences, if I make what I call progress, it all goes into the pot. This is a good introduction to the topic.

I can sympathize with *André Gide who said ' Whenever I get ready to write really sincere notes in this notebook, I shall have to undertake such a disentangling in my cluttered brain that, to stir up all that dust, I am waiting for a series of vast empty hours, a long old, a convalescence, during which my constantly reawakened curiosities will be at rest; during which my sole care will be to rediscover myself'*



I guess he must have had many demands on his time because I do not find such a problem getting in to gear. I have trained my mind / brain so that my target of 1500 words normally comes about without difficulty. The brain is the ultimate relational data base so it can do unlimited 'joining of the dots' and extrapolations so I don't think I will run out of inspiration any time soon. It is INspiration not EXpiration by the way.

Dear reader, take from my material and make of it what you will. The readership is small. Sometimes I get 200 page visits per day, sometimes less that half that but it has never made any difference to the focus on what I write. Certainly the lessons I learn can be transferred to other areas of my life, generally the result of discipline and increased awareness. I hope to start a diary group for anyone and everyone maybe early next year.

(Some of) the World at War

(I am jumping around here) I returned from church and we had lunch. After lunch we turned on Al Jazeera TV, one of the few reliable political commentary programs available, and we watched two hours of description of how the Gaza strip has been continually bombed and destroyed during the past three weeks starting October 7 2023. . They are bombing human beings. They are bombing hospitals. Israeli troops are shooting teenage males in the genitals and girls in the vagina

to stop conception of a population that they obviously consider to be animals, or in their terms, *goyen*. As an impassioned witness said, *how many more people have to die or be murdered before the west takes any notice*. I am embarrassed at our leaders here in the United Kingdom as they cannot bring themselves to condemn the violence and ask for a ceasefire.

The brutal violence is in front of our eyes and yet we do nothing. This is not quite true because marches are taking place all over the world but unfortunately the Israeli government thinks that God wants them to run the world by quoting Ezekiel in the Old Testament and will not be deterred. Bombing a hospital full of 12,000 casualties and refugees means as much to them as swatting flies because the Palestinians are not human in their eyes.

My church service

Nothing of this was discussed at our church service this morning. I always rely on any and all meetings to give me inspiration for what I'm going to talk about. This morning was no exception. I met a visitor. G. who had not found a satisfactory church to inspire him from the point of view of doctrine and protocol. This I totally understood and listened to him with undivided attention. I've jokingly said that he was a difficult customer but we did agree that in any church setting we had to compromise. I could not agree more with this because I compromise with the Vineyard group where I do not fully identify with the asking Jesus to come into our lives as if by default he was not in our lives. We ask him to move whatever that means when it is us and our free will but has to do the moving. During these times, keep quiet and respectful and let them get on with it.

This calls me to consider my own position with regard to churches that I have attended. About 30 years ago I attended a church presided over by Dr Martin Israel who was a holy man, dislikes the church as an establishment, and was transparent

about himself and his failings. I attended the church for about three years, it was in Kensington in London and attracted to congregation of about 50. I remember once when a couple with a child came into the church and the child started crying thus disrupting everything and no doubt his thought processes. He did ask from the pulpit that the child leave the church which they duly did. I talked with him afterwards about this and he said he felt bad about it but I said that the needs of the congregation come first and that the parents must have known that their child was being disruptive. In other words their behavior was selfish.

As I have described before, I attended the church of my father, St Andrews, Guilderfield Road, Streatham, London SW16 in a church now amazingly burnt down, We moved to Norfolk when I was 16 years of age and during this time I did not attend church. I moved to London to commence work and then at the age of 20 was accepted as a student of Saint Johns College, Durham, where they had a splendid Cathedral. They were one of the few colleges that did not require Latin. I did not attend services at the Cathedral as was the daily custom of the whole school. Looking back, do not understand why I was a recidivist.

Only when I came to Somerset did I start attending church. I attended the Methodist Church in Midsomer Norton High Street for a couple of years and was impressed by the larger congregations and the down to earth nature of the officiant. They also had a served lunch for four pounds every Tuesday and I attended and volunteered in the kitchen to serve them. Unfortunately, there was a rather officious lady that came in to organize us and I found her tone off-putting so I quietly exited stage left

I attended Church of England services for 2-3 years at All Saints Paulton but then the tenancy changed and the new vicar arrived, and was very keen on introducing new ideas which included getting rid of the organ and choir and relying on his

own efforts with a guitar. What did it for me was that he allowed his children to run around the church during services, an action that I found very disturbing and made me unable to concentrate on what was being said. Regarding complaints about the noise of the children he did not respond.

The only manifestation of my interest remained meeting with a group of quite lively parishioners at the coffee morning every Tuesday between 10 am and 11:30 am. It is nice to exchange information with fellow believers even though the conversation is very local.

As with my new contact G, and myself, we seem to have the same type of problem. If it's not the protocol that is wrong, it is the personality of the priest or vicar or the denomination or the actual faith type e.g. Salvation Army, Catholic, Methodist, Quakers even the Church of England. Are we both destined to be Rolling Stones going from one establishment to another? From what my new friend described, it sounds as if he would have been better off in the early church environment where people met in secret in each other's homes. He did say to me that he clams up when there are more than a certain number of people gathered together. Yes, my behavior changes too.

I think there are as many ways of worshiping as there are people on the earth and I suggest that we need as a methodology to identify what we wish to AVOID, in case so-called clappy people who put in shopping lists to God, plus ill discipline in the church, and doctrine that is plainly wrong. I would personally go for a quiet contemplative group where we can meditate on the important things of life and share our life experience. I get on best with people who are actually doing something and I reminded of the text, be doers of the Word and not just hearers of the word.

I'm not very good at evangelical matters. The idea of going up to people and ask them if they knew Jesus may work in some

cases but for me I prefer to inquire about them in general and ask them questions which may or may not lead to curiosity about the Christian religion. I think with strangers, it is what I call 'pushing it' to mention Jesus at the first meeting without prompting. I would rather tell them what I'm doing and then say that it is prompted by a love of the community and following my faith and let them respond if they are so moved.

The address this morning was about the use of Sunday, describing it as a day of restoration and renewal. We were reminded that we should use our precious freedom to serve one another. I commented on the abjuration to 'pray without ceasing' which Saint Paul said and I said that we were not supposed to be on our knees all the time but having an attitude of mind of connectedness towards God so we would be effectively praying.

You may be also aware that I'm very good at talking to strangers and had developed this to a fine art but this has been written about elsewhere in this journal.

Back to the service itself. During this morning's episode we had a testimony from one of the leaders, Drew, who described his conversion to Christianity. He had sat on the fence for many years and although he showed an interest, not committed himself. He finally responded in his own time and in his own way after promptings from his girlfriend now his wife. He announced his conversion and giving his life to Jesus via a text message. She called him up not having read the message as she was in Wales with very little signal. Finally she read the message and was overjoyed at his conversion. At times, he found it difficult to give the testimony without breaking down into tears but managed to hold it together. I do admire someone speaking from the heart even though it is difficult.

After the testimony we were invited to gather in small groups and give testimony to each other. Not a lot came out of our group but we did discuss the importance of authenticity, being

aware at all times, and praying without ceasing which basically means that prayer is not a question of the mumbling of words but of an attitude of continual contact with our creator.

Our allotment

Mainly due to the enthusiasm of my partner Françoise, our two allotments are cultivated and today she bought home a great variety of greens, unsullied by artificial fertilizers with which we are happy to feed ourselves. The annual general meeting of our motley Crew of allotmenters is going to take place next week. Due to the method of my enforced departure I feel no identity with it and shall not be attending. Basically I have said all I can say through my work and if people wish to continue with the work they will follow the example that I have set. Up to the membership in general, those who turn up, to make their points of you. RIP

My car

As you may have noticed, I re-designed the left rear door of the car through an encounter with a concrete post. I sprayed some paint on it which made it look even worse but today I went to get a paint solvent which would not skin the whole thing alive. You paint it on with the brush like a jelly and it makes the paint more like a jelly and you scrape it off. I used a credit card. I went over the area at dusk this evening and low and behold the body work looks much better. Next week I will get the garage to unbuckle the door and hopefully we will have something that looks like it did before.

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