

# My Somerset Life

## A diary by Brian Snellgrove


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**Frome Christian Mens Group  
meeting**



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As you may know I have featured hundreds of posters since I started this diary. Some are on the mark and some are not. The above gives a very powerful visual message about what correct advice can do. I saw it in the church hall in which we had our men's breakfast this morning

Up early this morning to attend the Christian men's breakfast in Frome. It is always a pleasure to meet articulated successful men, not without problems it must be said, who have something to give and are genuinely interested in other people in the fellowship. We met at eight am in a local church and found the cook already busy preparing what was a very lovingly cooked and thoughtfully served breakfast. I don't know what counts as a fast but it was 12 hours since I last ate so in western terms I suppose that counts as abstinence.

The breakfast consisted of magical little squares of fried bread cooked – not in cheap fried fat – but something akin to coconut oil, small bits of lean bacon, carefully grilled small mushrooms, tomatoes, good old baked beans, fried egg and some very fine sausages which he got from Lidl. I know the chap is very caring and the whole meal went down like magic. I am convinced over the years that if something is cooked with love it tastes better and is accepted by the human body more readily. I may be deluding myself but that's what I found.

We started with prayers and announcements and then Mike spoke, a man who against all odds is trying to install local broadcasting stations in Gaza. There were 16 but they have all been either disabled or destroyed. He is a person who never takes no for an answer. The Israelis will not allow in any equipment that could be dual use in other words could be used by insurgents and fighters. Their whole transmitting kit including microphone weight about 20 kilograms and has a radius of five miles which means it can cover the Gaza strip which is 10 miles wide.

Mike met someone through serendipity who is in a position of

authority with the United Nations who may give him the authority to bring through the transmitter. I wanted to engage him on political matters by asking about Hamas and finding out if they were as bad as they had been made out to be. He replied that he was not interested in politics and just concerned with food, shelter, medical attention, safety. I shall engage him on the phone and find out whether he has met members of Hamas and if so what they are like.

After the talk I gave a testimony about the meeting I had last Wednesday, please see my diary, and said that I agreed with him that we should not overthink and if we get an impulse to say something or meet someone we should do so trusting that it is from a higher source. The meeting I had with my friend recently mentioned about matters in such a small country as Lesotho and that two successive people 100 miles apart would have the interest of a person 4000 miles away in common blows my mind.

I remember asking myself why I was telling someone who did not know Steve, the first contact, about something in such a small South African country, to find that they immediately jumped on it with the right contact. The odds against this are millions to one. As I said, you could not make it up.

A member of the group was trying to register as a charity, a board of trustees that included someone from Kenya. They have not found a bank that is willing to take on this mixed heritage although the Kenyan trustee would be giving thousands of pounds to charity. The meeting ended at 9:30 a.m. with prayers asking that God bless and look after the suffering connected with what's happening in Israel and the Gaza strip.

As I have said before with this type of meeting, there is no feeling better than being understood and accepted and I certainly felt that this morning so yes it was getting up early and driving to Frome. Unfortunately, the meetings are less than once a month but I suppose that makes it more

valued. I've offered my services to the committee to beef up the newsletter and enhance the communication potential that exists between each of the members currently about 30 in number.

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## **Synchronicity writ large. You could not make it up**

Another really bad night. Awoke at 1:30 am. I had only eaten cous cous but that was enough to set off the acid reflux reaction. My legs were burning. I opened the sash windows and heard a man calling desperately for his friend or his dog. It made a surreal impression what with the wind and the rain which lashed down from time to time. I made it through the night and we went down for breakfast at 8.30 am

The staff really get to know their guests and go the extra mile to chat to them. In November, the hotel was taken over by a group specialising in buying Apartments and servicing them and they have around 87 in the Plymouth area so this is a big scale operation. The new owners wisely recognized the bright and cheerful staff as an asset and have kept them on. This morning I had a large plate of prunes, apricots, mixed fruit with two strawberry yogurts. I then had a large plate of porridge. Then had two poached eggs on toast with all the coffee I could drink.

The real pain in the backside is parking. Ringo which is a parking specialist have obviously worked together with the council to maximize income. If you want to park in the street it will cost you over 16 pounds a day with a minimum of £2.20 per hour. However it does not say when the paid parking hours are. If you look very carefully at the bottom on the small print you see that it ends at nine o'clock in the evening but it is not clear when the charging period starts. Is it 8 a.m., 9am? If I arrive at three a.m and depart at 4am do I have to

pay £2.20. I think the complicated instructions are a subtle form of harassment to make people feel insecure.

There is no question that there is a huge parking problem in Plymouth and very few car parks. For using a parking space in the hotel the charge was £12.50 per 24 hour period. They could also sell us a day ticket for eight pounds but it runs till 10:00 a.m. each day. If you wish to stay in a city Hotel like this one it is really worth inquiring about the terms and conditions are parking.

Anyway we left in the rain about 10 am. Purchased some petrol and off we went to see an old friend in South Somerset. Three years ago my friend's house was flooded by an exceptional cloud burst that happened up the lane from where she lives and repairs cost nearly 1 million pounds. Water damage is not just to the surface to be swept up with a mop and broom but it makes the whole brickwork damp and you have to wait months for it to dry out before you can rebuild.

The good news was that the whole place received a modernization and an uplift and it is like having a new home. My friend has two cats but three very large dogs . They are train to protect their owners . If someone comes along to the grounds that they do not know they do not attack them but hold them down until someone comes along. I guess from their size that they are extremely good at what they do but I will not attempt providence by misbehaving their presence.

The conversations must remain private but we did discuss the next generation of quantum healing electronics, the Genius app. which analyzes from your voice your mental and physical condition. It then puts the appropriate waves into operation in order to balance your body and mind. We discussed at although we are very good at our work it may be time to let it go and make a contribution to society in another way.

We had a great surprise when I mentioned in passing that a



friend of mine needed some help in setting up his business in Lesotho. I had visited him only the day before. By the most amazing serendipity it appears that my friend knew someone in this very small landlocked country in South Africa who could be of the exact help that my friend Steve needed in order to move forward. I got Steve on the phone straight away and told him the news and then I got them both on the phone to exchange information. Steve is a great one for social transformation and renewal as was the person living in Lesotho who had been recommended by my friend.

I absolutely love this form of networking and I feel the only thing that is really worthwhile, never mind earning money or that a bit, is to bring people together for the greater good of mankind

To home. We drove 287 miles and spent £60 on petrol.

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## **The Box Arts Centre, Plymouth + a brilliant Tourist Information Bureau**



Plymouth's award-winning Tourist Information Centre is located in the Mayflower Museum at the heart of the picturesque Barbican; Plymouth's historic, maritime quarter. From here the friendly and knowledgeable staff can help you make the most of

your visit to Plymouth. Services available:

Free local accommodation booking service

Comprehensive information on attractions, accommodation, events, public transport and facilities in Plymouth

Free maps and guides to the area

Regional information on attractions, accommodation, events and transport

Public transport information and timetables

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View from the top floor of the Exhibition

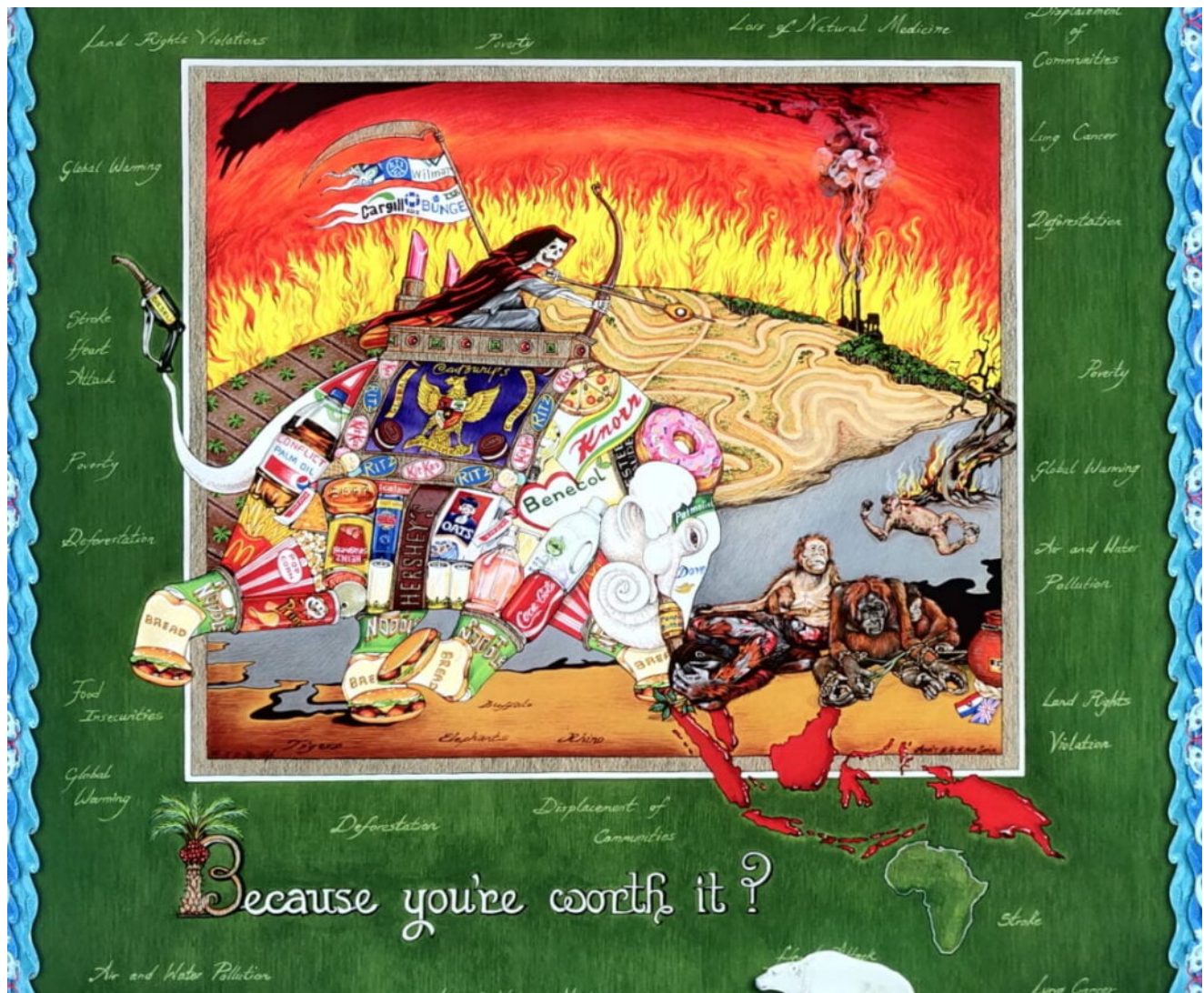
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I admit that I cannot do Justice in words for pictures to the Box Arts Centre. It is worth visiting Plymouth just to go round it and see the various exhibitions all of which are free. Some would cost between 10 and 20 pounds. There is a very good coffee bar light and snack cafe in the entrance hall, all the staff are friendly and motivated and expect to



spend at least two to three hours there.

**Cntr +** to view the text wording



## **The Singh Twins**

***Because You're Worth It? II, 2022***

**Digital dyed fabric lightbox**

The Singh Twins - Amrit and Rabindra Singh, MBE, DFA, LittD, D.Arts

The Singh Twins (b. 1966, London, UK) describe their style as Past Modern (as opposed to Post-Modern), drawing on traditional Indian and European art forms while engaging with contemporary debates. This work uses a well-known marketing slogan to condemn global consumerism and its impact on the environmental crisis. It employs the South Asian convention of composite animals (as seen earlier in the exhibition). Here, death rides an elephant made of brand logos and household products while firing a crossbow at a desperate family of orangutans.





From an amazing five screen show by john Akomfrah







A woolly Mammoth (yes it is real wool)

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## **Dartmoor Prison**





clear sparkling water from the hills seen from roadside coming down from our hotel to the prison.

'Dartmoor prison' conjures up in most people a desolate and lonely place surrounded by Wild Moors in this one of the most unspoiled areas in the country. It is given protected status for a reason. The prison itself is on the outskirts of Princetown. The population of Princetown, which is an ordinary enough town, with a population of somewhat less than 1500. When I read about it I felt that it was finally the time I went and had a look. Obviously we could not visit the prison itself but we attended the adjacent Museum which was an absolute gem, much historical information, and I reckon to be worth two or three hours of anyone's time.

The curator and guest greeter is a mine of information and told us a story about a male prisoner who escaped by jumping over the wall. In fact in so doing he broke his leg and hid to recover behind a hedge for some time. He then crawled around the outside perimeter of the prison to the nearest house and banged on the door asking for attention, to be greeted by an off-duty prison officer who asked him what he was doing and promptly took him back to prison no doubt via the local hospital.

One of the most moving exhibits was a drawing by one of the

prisoners, portraying Jesus Christ both being with friends and presiding at The Last Supper. I feel that the prisoner has really caught the compassion and ordinariness of Jesus without the holier than thou attitude that we are so used to seeing.



THOU ART THE CHRIST THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD



ΣΤ ΕΙ Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ Ο ΥΙΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΖΩΝΤΟΣ





Apologies re quality. Poor light. Pixilation occurs when I overdo the contrast.

**The Last Supper and Jesus with his disciples** was painted by a prisoner in the early 1950s. This artistic prisoner was called James Wanmantle, and ex sailor otherwise known in prison as Jimmy the one. And associate of the notorious Cray twins and the Richardsons he was in and out of trouble for most of his life. These pictures were painted while serving a 10 years sentence at Dartmouth for violent robbery. He was born in popular, East London, during 1929 of a Chinese father and Greek mother and he died in or around 1980. The artist has superimposed the images of his fellow prisoners on the characters round the table.

I have taken far more photographs than can be accommodated comfortably on this site.

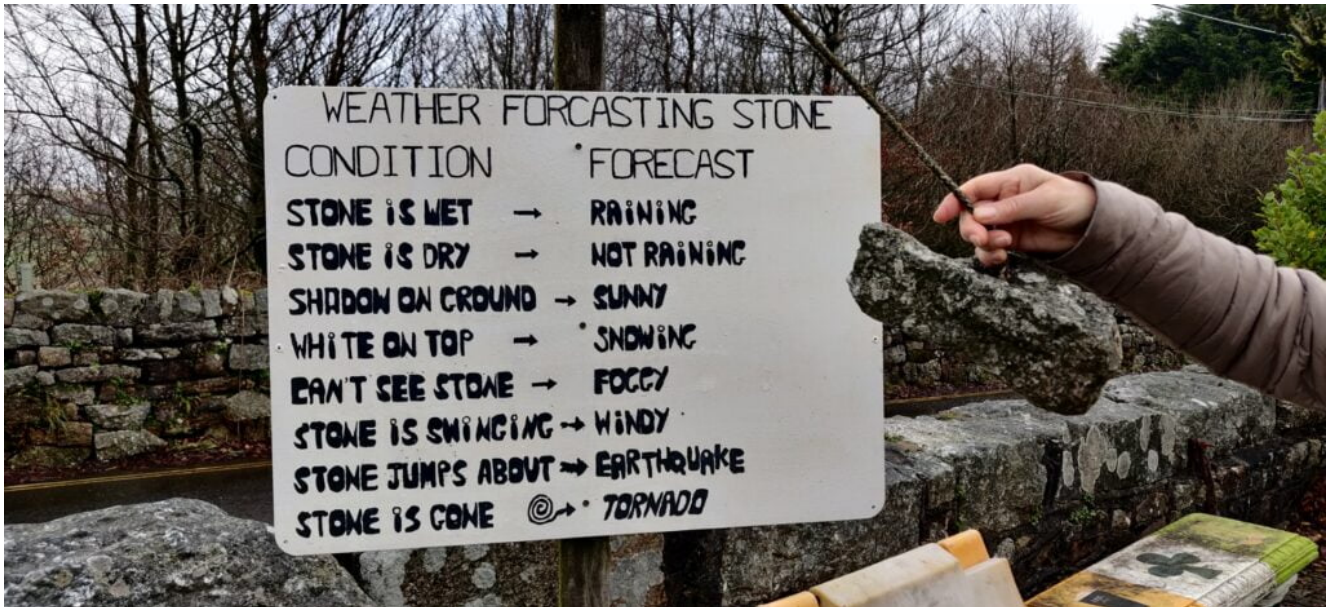
Here are some stats. As of the day of my visit there were 87,982 prisoners in England and Wales. The population of Dartmoor prison today is 516. The maximum capacity of Dartmoor prison is 689. Here are some more facts about the kitchen. **We have a team of seven staff working in the kitchen assisted by up to 35 Prisoners on a daily basis. We receive £2.30 per person per day to provide three meals and a supper item. We provide these meals seven days a week 365 days a year. We**

provide food for all religions, cultural and medical diets. Weekly we cook an average of 2,350 sausages so that is 122,200 per year which if laid down end to end would reach to Bedford Square in Tavistock. (*so now you know – Ed.*)

Another poster describes 'The Need'. Children of prisoners are often the forgotten victims of crime. Parental imprisonment can lead to shame, guilt, isolation, often resulting in failure at school. Children with the parent in prison are three times more prone to mental health problems than their peers. It is difficult to maintain family Ties from behind bars. Visits can be expensive as more than half of prisoners are held further than 50 miles away from home and even more for women prisoners. Many prisoners don't want their children to see them in prison, and phone calls can be expensive and difficult to arrange. In most establishments, prisoners are locked up for the night by 6 pm making family contact even more difficult. This was much worse during the pandemic as prisoners were locked up for 23 hours a day. Given the difficulties involved in keeping in touch, it is no wonder that family relationships can suffer immeasurably or break down altogether.

I did not know that the category of prisons, A, B, C, D, are not related to the seriousness of the crime but by the likelihood of escaping. Anyway I could go on forever giving you interesting facts but next time you're in the area or even going down to the southwest I suggest you pop in and have a look. They are open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and then on Saturday. Charging is very reasonable. Under five pounds it was for each of us. When you visit, don't forget there are rooms down stairs and to your right as you enter. Princetown Yelverton Devon **PL20 6RR** Yes there is a large car park adjacent.

Oh and before I leave, there is a funny (to me) Weather Forecasting Stone.



Francoise is holding the stone to the side so you can read it.

Tomorrow – the Amazing art gallery in Plymouth.

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## **Experiencing the howling wind of Dartmoor**

When I write articles I attempt to put an original view on something that makes it worth reading. I know you can't please all the people all the time but at least we can have a crack at it. First, I hope you like our new home page design which symbolizes more accurately what we are trying to achieve in terms of conveying the spirit of a living soul following their life path.





ned to set off Monday morning for Dartmoor and from there travel to Plymouth where we would stay two nights. However on Sunday morning I woke up feeling that these arrangements could be improved on. As there was nothing much holding us on the Sunday I decided we will go off during the afternoon. I booked a hotel straight away, The weather forecast was not brilliant but I thought if we stuck to the main roads we would be all right. I was wrong.

When we left it was raining but I did not realize the impact it would have and on the A37 going down to the A303 there was flooding. We made a very long diversion and instead went down the M5. The rain occurred on a water logged surface so as I joked with someone 'a farmer says he had 12 Fields but now he has 4 fields, 6 lakes and 2 Water Meadows. It is very difficult to tell the difference between a river and a stream'. I get a perverse pleasure out of driving through water at the side of the road and causing an enormous splash. I would of course not do this if there was a pedestrian who would take the consequences.

I booked a stay at The Forest Inn / pub / bed and breakfast. As I have described before there are many search engines for booking. I like the effort that has been put into the software for booking.com so you can see things on a map and read quite



a lot about the hotel before making a decision. Unless you book at the last moment, you have a few days before the event before you actually pay your money so you can cancel if you so wish and this could be a very good idea where children are involved or where the weather is variable.



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efinitely old world. Paddy the manager definitely knows his stuff and if you remain in the bar area you will notice a close-knit community where everybody knows everybody else. He told me that they have large numbers of Dutch people who for some reason are attracted to the moor. Paddy has lived in the area all his life; he went to Plymouth to get a degree but now finds it 'too far away'. Some reviews said that the hotel could do with a deep clean. I suppose it could but I don't really care because all the features were present, the feeling of history, a pleasant bar, and most of all an atmosphere.



It was so lovely to lie in bed and listen to the howling wind. It makes a different noise when there are no obstacles such as houses. Paddy said that next time we come we can get a better rate through calling them direct as they avoid the commission of 15% to booking.com. Someone else said that at the next hotel we stayed at which was in Plymouth. So people who are thinking of booking, it might be worth a try contacting the hotel directly, they can only say no or they might even say yes.



Oh and by the way, darkness at night really is dark. There was a slightly surreal telephone box lit from within that was now a defibrillator. I did not photograph it but here is a reminder. I did not have the best night in the world. I am sensitive to EMF; it feels as if my whole body is being scratched and there is no escape. I even stood outside the hotel on a grass verge at half past one in the morning in the rain in bare feet to try and ground the energies. In case you laugh, it is a science, the process is called Grounding where the energies of your

feet link to the energies of the Earth.

I did feel a little bit better afterwards and eventually went to sleep. Strangely even if I have had a terrible night, when I get up at say 8am somehow my body has become refreshed. If I have had a stomach pain at 2am it has disappeared in the morning and I am ready to launch into a full English breakfast.

--VIDEO LIBRARY--

The secret economics destroying Britain | Gary Stevenson interview

## **My Somerset Life by Brian Snellgrove**

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