

# My Somerset Life

## A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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# Bristol to London for less than a cup of coffee

## The satisfaction of advance planning

If there's one thing I enjoy, it is advance planning. I make most of my plans for the main spine of my activities weeks before the event and that includes imagining what might go wrong and making corrections before I ever set foot on public transport or step in my car.

I'm going to visit my sister in Croydon, London, in April and today is the time for booking tickets. We basically have a choice of two modes of travel excluding the car. In the old days – of cheaper petrol – you could park where you wanted in London but now we have a looming 20 mile an hour speed limit based on no evidence, we have ULEZ, basically in London you are taxed even for sitting in a car (joke) never mind driving it. Also the public transport in London is excellent. So for the nerds among you that like detail, these are my calculations

I live nearer to Bath than Bristol but recently Bath has ceased to be a major hub for going to London and most National Express services to London now go via Bristol on the way which adds to the length of the journey. There was a time – last year 2023 – when you could go via National Express from Bath for £5 single but those days are gone. Thank you, National Express, for (not) giving us advanced warning. Among the few direct buses there is the National Express that leaves Bath at 10:05 arriving Victoria 13:20. The cost of this is £12.40 and that's booking in advance. If you wanted to travel next day that's £19.70.

## Bristol vs. Bath

A much better hub where competition prevails is Bristol. Here the fare on **National Express** reflects the competitive nature of the departing city so I can take the 10 o'clock from Bristol arriving 12:50 London Victoria for £5.90 and this is an advance booking rate by the way. If I wanted to go tomorrow Friday by the same bus it would cost me £12.90. If I wanted to go with **Megabus** and take the 13:00 which arrives in Victoria 15:30 for an advance booking on the 12th of April it will be £5.98. If I wanted to take the same bus for a journey tomorrow Friday that will cost me £12.99.

If I wanted to go with **Flixbus**, a bus leaving at 11:25 from Bristol arriving 2:30 p.m. would cost me £4.99 booking. If I had chosen to travel later that day 12 April I could have done it for £2.99. If I wanted to travel tomorrow Friday by the 10:30 a.m. but it will cost me £14.99 but if I wait until 11:25 a.m it will cost me £9.99. Please note that with this service some of the buses terminate at Hammersmith which you may not find very attractive.

Now something which is a bit of a game changer for us, traveling by train. Believe it or not, because of our lifestyle we rarely travel by this mode of transport mainly because of the cost. However, I bought a Two Together travel card which means that when we travel together – as the name implies – we get a third off the price. We are going to take the 11:30 train from London Paddington arriving in Bath 12:44 which takes one hour 14 minutes. The total cost of this for two people is £32.79

I ended up with deciding on Megabus traveling on the 13.00 to London so for the two of us is as below. (The SMS fee is to qualify for being updated on any changes).

Cost and Payment Summary		
<b>Ticket Price:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>5.98</b>
<b>Booking Fee:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>1.00</b>
<b>SMS Fee:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>0.45</b>
<b>Total Paid:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>7.43</b>

I also booked via TrainLine two tickets for the return journey. No fancy graphics but it was **£32.79** so total return spend £40.22 i.e. £20.11 per person return. Maybe it's the fact that I was born in Yorkshire, an area known for its thrift when spending is concerned but I do love a bargain and this certainly falls into that category. All I must remember to do now is to take my mobile phone with me because without the QR code you can't go anywhere.

The moral to the story is 'book ahead'. Everyone is in the game of making money or making a profit should I say so we have to play the system and beat it. The system is so designed that last minute travelers are penalized so what do you do? You plan in advance. Not rocket science. Just a bit of forethought.

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## The risks of buying cheap items on the internet

### Order dispatched

Order date: 04 Mar, 2024 • Order total: £3.95 • Order number: 12-11264-37224



**Dispatched: Est. delivery Thu 7 Mar - Mon 11 Mar**

Returns not accepted.

Silver Digital LCD Temperature Alarm Clock

£3.95

Sold by: [mawat\\_5391](#)

Whilst on the subject of thrift, I ordered a travel alarm / bedside clock from EBay. There is a saying that 'you get what you pay for' with the implication that if you are spending very little money you will not get much in return. I do find that material from China carries a higher risk of variable reliability but what came was a very beautiful aluminium faced alarm clock with all the whistles and bells except an illuminated dial and for £3.95 including post it is not the end of the world if it doesn't come up to expectation. Hey, its little more than a cup of coffee.

You just return it if terms and conditions allow. Having said that I'm not sure what eBay's policy is on this. There are all sorts of reasons why a product can be cheap. Someone may have been on the receiving end of a lot from a company that went into liquidation and they just want to get rid of items as quickly as possible. I suspect this is the case here as no returns are accepted. If the seller has a good reputation and the returns policy is good then what do you have to lose? A little bit of Inconvenience?

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Total change of subject now. Try it. What film does this remind you of... They Live???

**Blink your eyes fast and you will see a hidden message**



## **A challenge to my body comfort zones**



This morning I went to my yoga session. You may say 'so what'? The teaching method of the yoga teacher is fascinating. We never do the same routine twice. There is always a new variation which she thinks up, and this is at a basic level in our training. Today we were each given a chair and we did our session mostly from a sitting position but boy was it a challenge. I'm not very good lifting up my legs to the level of my head. I'm not very good standing on one foot while facing left with my arm pointing to the sky. Anyway the teacher says that I'm not doing too badly so I will take her

word for it. She can compare my performance with other people of my age. The session lasts for one hour 15 minutes and I reckon that's about right because we spend a good few minutes relaxing, preparing for the session and the same thing at the end, so it's about an hour's worth of core teaching.

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## **Report from Wetherspoons – sticks and stones will break my bones ...**

After the yoga session I went to Wetherspoons for a well-earned cup of coffee, actually I had two cups because it is bottomless coffee for £1.56. On the table there are the usual intrusive and rather annoying menus of various sorts but there was also a special edition Wetherspoons “does truth matter?” Tim Martin the owner was taking main stream newspapers to task for making untrue statements, together with their publication of apologies and or corrections from pretty much all the media in this country. On page 18 of this utterance was a heading which I took very much to heart “nothing could prepare me for the online war: Christina Lamb on being attacked by the trolls”.

I have never been attacked by trolls certainly not in the modern age though I have had certain negative comments on my utterances on my websites. I have had no death threats, threats of violence to me or my partner. I have the advantage of not being in a job so have nothing to lose as I am now a pensioner. So social media is full of speculative material and people who have nothing better to do

with their time than be a scourge to others. If you are deeply involved in social media it is difficult to ignore and escalating series of threats and comments from more than one person never mind hundreds. J.K. Rowling is being abused for saying that there are only two sexes.



To me this is pretty obvious and you just check by looking south. The evermore ridiculous and woke BBC say there are 153 sexes. The article on dimensionality which I wrote yesterday does have a bearing on this topic. If your identity is invested in the third (physical) dimension of life then you will be much affected by negative feedback but if you genuinely dwell in a higher spiritual dimension you will not be so effected though probably saddened. I am glad I'm not political journalist who is covering events in Israel. I would have to put up with being called an extremist even if I was defending people's rights not to be slaughtered in large numbers just for being of a particular nationality.

I'm sure my time will come but if I am abused in public it will be a great test of my character and my objectivity. They say that 'sticks and stones will break my bones but calling names will not hurt us'. That assumes a rather dull level of consciousness so it is not enormously helpful to me. The phrase was first used in an American periodical, the Christian recorder, in March 1862. True courage consists in doing what is right, despite the jeers and sneers of our companions. I agree that may sound a little bit pious but as I say, maybe I've been lucky so far, if it happens to me I can report from the Inside so to speak.

## **Anyone can be accused of anything**

What worries me is that anyone can accuse you of anything and if it does not appear to fit with the agenda then you could be reported or lose your job. There was an article today in the Daily Mirror where a head teacher was sacked for tapping her son's hand in her office when she was trying to get her three-year-old to stop playing with the bottle of hand sanitizer when she used two fingers to attract his attention, leading to an employee accusing her of assault. She did in fact win her unfair dismissal case. The accuser said that she was hurting



her son and filed an official complaint, which led to the head being suspended and the police being called.

Despite the police ruling that her actions were reasonable chastisement by a parent the headteacher was found guilty of gross misconduct and sacked. She is now in line for compensation after an employment judge concluded that there was no evidence that she had committed physical chastisement or an assault her dismissal unfair. She was the head of Northwold primary school in Hackney, East London. UK

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

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