

My Somerset Life

A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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A saunter round Bath with an old friend

However many times I visit Bath, there is always something new to experience. I was able to help several visitors (as I like to do) and when you see Japanese people you know that the season has started. This time I counted six different languages. Today we visited in order to meet a long standing friend of ours who lives in Dublin and has been a client and friend for over 20 years now. She was on her way to see someone in Wiltshire so we were able to have a few hours together.

Mystery image



Opposite the bus station there was a collection of what appeared to be new travel cases sitting on their own. It is so unusual to see that I wondered how long they would be there without anyone taking them away. Maybe they are rigged to explode. Perhaps they contained a body. I can hardly say that someone would dump these cases casually. So, quick decision, I suppressed my natural curiosity and let them be and I left the experience to some other person to discover their contents.

They were unlabeled so could not have been left by a tour group.

To lunch at Manvers Street Baptist Church



This is an open house centre. The church also has a homeless shelter and also a facility for people with downs syndrome and other conditions which makes it difficult for them to communicate in the normal way. People thus affected are engaged by the church to serve food and do washing up. This is their way of becoming integrated into society and the whole thing seems to work pretty well. I strongly recommend this place to anyone who is community minded and who wants a chat in a place without being deafened by music or noisy ambience.

The lady who served us was hard of hearing and to put it politely worked at her own pace but she was very caring and treated everyone with courtesy and old-fashioned kindness. The man who brought the food to the table was partly autistic I think that I'm not very good at evaluating the various mental conditions but he started telling us jokes and laughing at them himself. I told him one or two in exchange. It's open for four hours a day between 10 am and two pm. That should work well for volunteers who don't want to give up their whole day.

Guildhall Market



The one we went to overlooks the weir and is for the most part retro in appearance. There is the largest haberdashery selection I have ever seen which is spread along one wall. There is a worker's cafe hiding on the left and an amazing bits and bobs utensil and gadget store on the right as you go in. There is a Frenchman selling, believe it or not, French cheese and a large stand selling various types of ground coffee. I hope the business rates are reasonable because this market lends color and tradition as you would expect with a starting date of 1888

St Michael's Without



Do not even think of trying to park near this church. Use the car parks which are 10-15 minutes away. You almost dont need a map. There are friendly maps scattered throughout the city. The bus and train stations are adjacent to the tourist area so it is very easy to get about.



I am the light of the world. Nice that this text is next to

the symbolic water server, free to all. A nice touch.



Prayers are exhibited on the screens to encourage visitors to join in prayer. This is the front of what used to be the nave.



Conflicted areas of the world where our prayers are needed.

I absolutely love this model because it invites you in, it is not too 'churchy', It doubles as a place where anyone can come in for a meal, there is space for reflection and worship. I have no idea how many people visit on Sunday for a service but

if you felt like it and you weren't doing anything else you would be more than welcome I am sure. I did once glance at the vicar who was there presiding over some matter or another and he seem very avuncular* and inclusive.

Avuncular – **kind and friendly towards a younger or less experienced person: “he was avuncular, reassuring, and trustworthy” 2. relating to the relationship between men and the children of their siblings.*

44AD artsplace.

We then went to an art gallery (see leaflet)



This was a collection of sculptures by a group of 12 artists who themselves are part of the wider local area group of over 100 artists. Artists are naturally solitary people and I suppose they get together for sharing resources when it comes to exhibition curation and management.

The affable artist on duty was talking about his love of copper. We asked him where he got his supplies and he says from Birmingham and they are supplied in sheets which have to be worked, cut, formed and then colored which he does by heat.

Below – a remarkable work in pink which I found very disconcerting. They looked positively moldy I would not buy it but it would find a home somewhere.



Entertainment outside the Abbey



Entertainment was available all day in this Square. As we arrived we had an opera singer who was singing a very well known work by Puccini. Unfortunately she was walking around while she was singing and that did detract from her focus and concentration so as a result some of the notes were a little off key. As it was on the hour, someone else came along with the guitar and sung homely songs with a western flavour. These sparse audience clapped politely as you do when you are relaxing in the sunshine. My goodness it was actually an announcement of spring.! About time too.

Marks and Spencer's

My guest from Ireland kindly bought me a very nice jacket as an advance birthday present. It is my 80th birthday in June. My friends and meaningful contacts are spread over a wide geographical area so I can't see myself having a big gathering at one place so I will probably have small gathering in a number of places and we will also go away on our own for a couple of days

Is Bath worth visiting?

Choose your dates carefully because in high summer there are a great number of tourists visiting this beautiful town. Every

essential feature is contained within about two square miles so you can entertain your self quite easily by museums, shops, quaint curiosities, the river, perhaps going for a boat trip and then sampling the hundreds of good quality shops that's still exist in spite of the recession. The basic reason is that there's a lot of money in Bath and a lot of tourist income from all over the world.

If anyone has a question about Bath I could probably answer it, so do pop the question in the comments and I will see it and reply

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