

# My Somerset Life

## A diary by Brian Snellgrove

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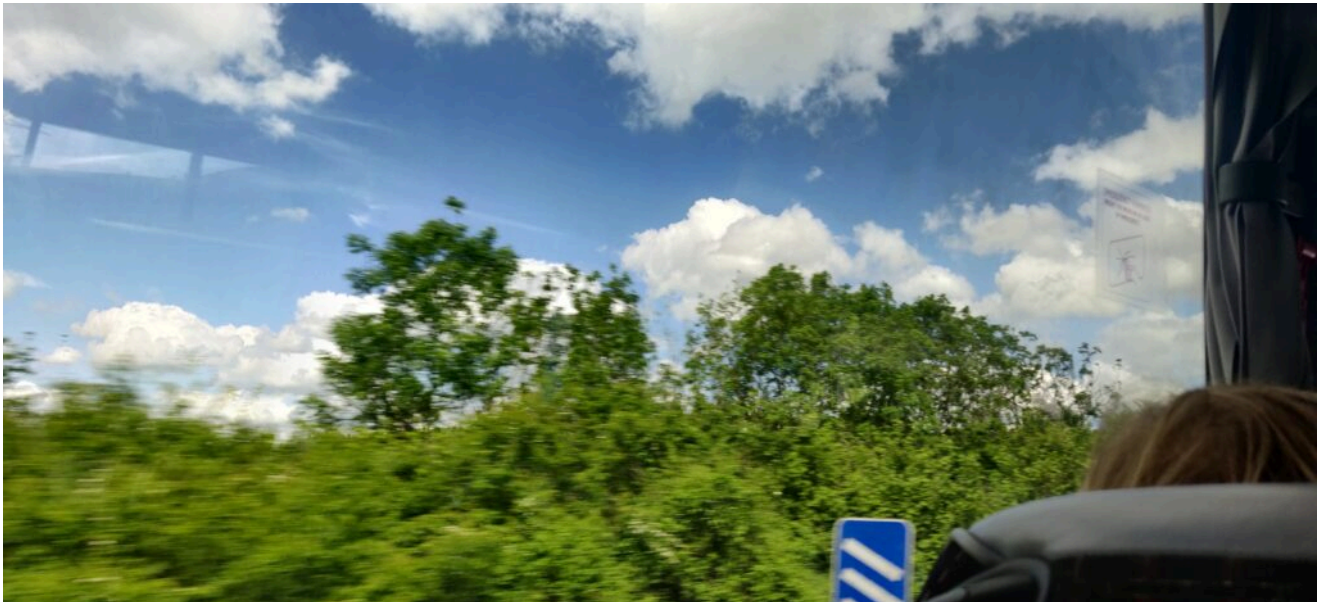
# Pictorial adventures in London part 1

Once more I am drawn to London this time to celebrate someone's birthday, that someone being the oldest friend I have going back to 1966. Once again I went the cheapo way via Megabus from Bristol for the princely sum of £2.99 on the outward journey and £3.99 on the return journey. My friend kindly put me up at the Premier Inn in Hampstead about which I have written many times.

This trip I don't want to put too much pressure on myself by describing everything that happened but have decided to confine myself to illustrating the many images that I took.



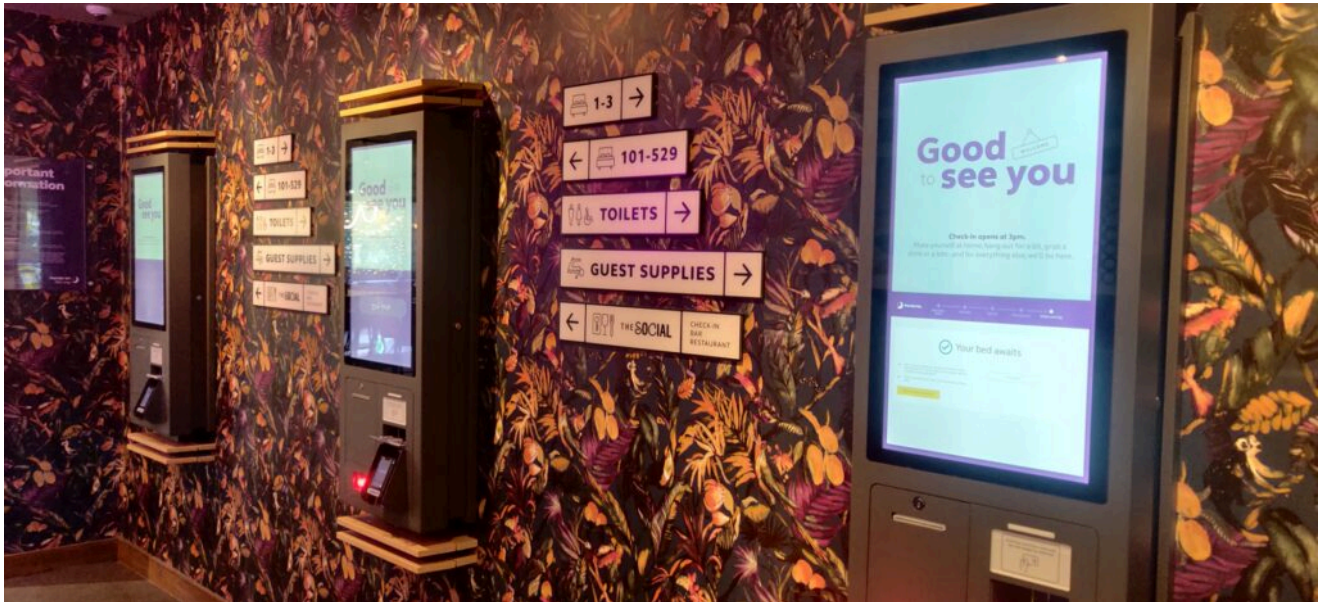
Those of us who are alternative minded, indeed biblically minded, are aware of the mark of the Beast which is 666. I would be careful of this number (joke). This was in the departure zone in Bristol



When choosing your coach seat the trick of getting no one to sit next to you is to sit on an aisle seat not the window seat with your package on the aisle seat. Baggage is seen as easier to move than a person. Sprawling over 2 seats is too obvious a ploy.

We had a flawless outward journey taking somewhat over two hours and I always feel extra smug thinking how little I am paying. To be fair, National Express are also available from this very competitive hub from £5. The weather was beautiful, fresh and sunny and the driver, Martin, was a very jolly man with a sense of humour.





I arrived at the hotel to find it completely refurbished but was disappointed to find no reception area. Machines can never be friendly but as I was fumbling around a bit a member of staff came to my aid. This is the first time I can remember being asked to scan my own room key but hey, age of technology and all that. so let's go with it. Its not all bad.



I set off for my 'walk around' and found my favourite local supermarket (it used to be called Budgens) and was rudely reminded how prices can be sky high. Cherries at £20.70 per kilogram. What a bargain! If money is no object who cares?





The store had been completely refurbished (I know this will not be much to people who are not Londoners) but when something is redesigned properly you see how tatty and outdated the old layout was. There is an increasing tendency towards check yourself out machines, with human help only required to verify over 18 with regard to alcohol.

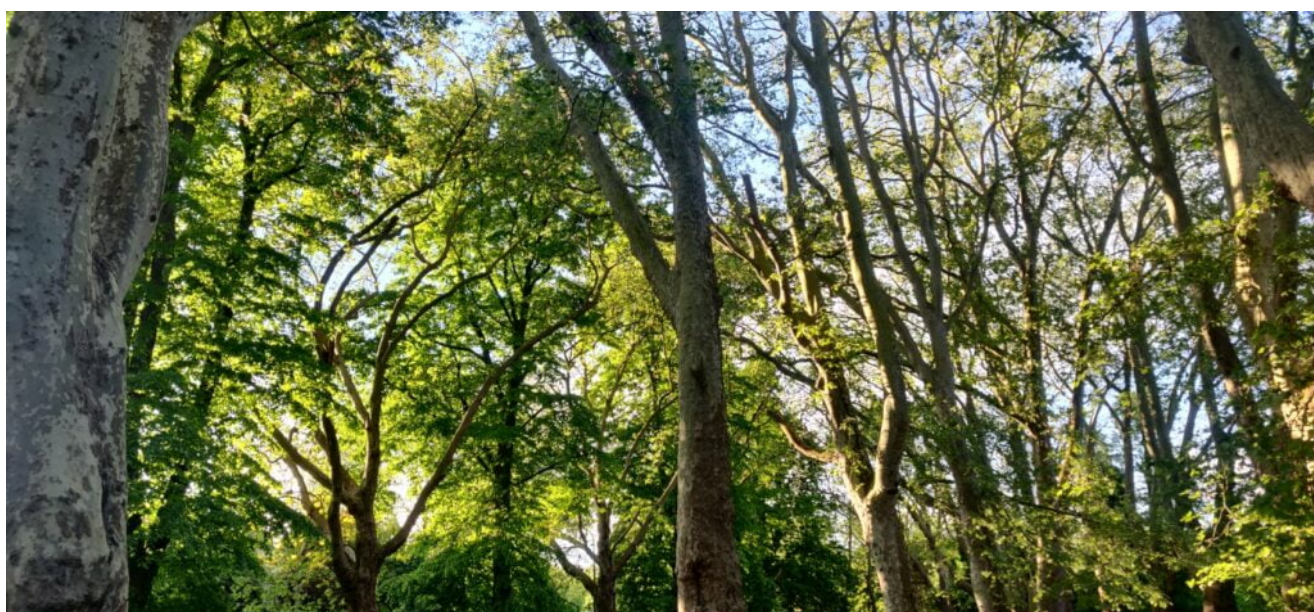


I did not feel much like sitting in a restaurant so I decided to have a take away and consume it in my room; it was an excellent salmon salad with a small bottle of wine which cost me about 12 pounds and satisfied me for the evening. Sometimes, less is more.





I love graffiti in all shapes and forms and here was an original graphical one, the style of which I have not seen before. It was on a railway bridge.



On to nearby Hampstead Heath itself which I would recommend to anyone who is feeling in need of a lift for whatever reason. Among these amazing trees, the parakeets have made it their own territory and squawk in their own inimitable fashion





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I just love this poster that I saw in a charity shop. You would only see this type of poster in a fairly sophisticated area such as Hampstead. It would not work in places like Bath



This is the local friendly fox that patrols the grounds outside the Royal Free Hospital. Clearly he regards this as its own territory.



This is a nearby insect hotel on Hampstead Green



# Hampstead Green

Hampstead Green is a small open space managed for nature conservation. It is a spring meadow which provides early food for insects as well as a stunning display for passers by.



Primrose

The area has been an open space for many hundreds of years and sits next to St. Stephen's church, designed by Samuel Teulon and built in 1869.

There is a mix of native and cultivated Daffodils and Bluebells, plus Cowslips and Primroses. The site is left uncut until around June when the spring flowers have finished and then the grass is cut regularly throughout the summer.

Although Bluebells, as the name suggests, are commonly blue there are also pink and white varieties which you can see on this site. Even though it was once a common British plant few uses are recorded apart from being used as a sticky juice that provided gum for book-binding and as a starch used in Elizabethan times to stiffen ruffles.



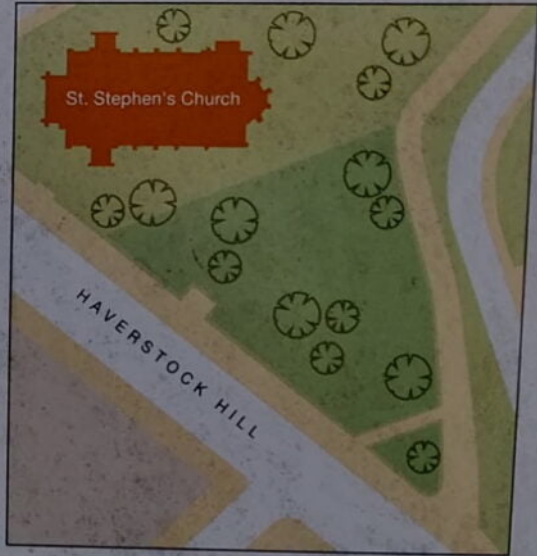
Blue Tit

The mixture of trees on the site, which includes Oak, Sycamore and Poplar, provides good cover for birds, and bird boxes have been put up to encourage nesting. Large logs are left to provide a habitat for many creatures including the woodlouse, spiders and various beetles. Woodland wildflowers have also been planted where there is less light including Wood anemone and Ramsons creating another habitat for wildlife.

We hope you enjoy this small but valuable site.



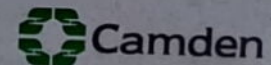
Woodlouse



Anemone

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Back to the hotel and a checking out of the TV stations. A pathetic piece from Scotland about a woman who was arrested for praying silently. Are the SNP completely off their rocker?

And so to bed. Fiddle with the air conditioner to keep the room at a constant 20 degrees. You can hardly hear it working. Brilliant.

## Next

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