

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME...

Roger Wheeler clicks his ruby slipper heels and takes a look at what's on offer in Brighton

Trips abroad at this time of year are expensive. Travel companies know that we love going away at Christmas and hike up prices accordingly, supply and demand is their cry. So as we live in one of the most visited parts of the country, I took a look at what was on offer in this great little city of ours and what did I find? Many reasons to go away. That does sound a little cynical, as all the well known bars and clubs will be doing their utmost to put on parties and promotions but for tired old boys like me I find it all very repetitive and just a little boring. But here we are, so let's make the best of it.

Our main theatres are, as usual, a big disappointment with the **Theatre Royal** managing to stage a version of **Cinderella**. We have the annual **Holiday On Ice Show** to look forward to at the **Brighton Centre**. The **Dome** has the usual run of one nighters plus **Handel's Messiah** (Wed 22) and the annual **Viennese concert** (Fri 31). All good in their own way no doubt but not exactly exciting.

So are there any new places to eat and drink? Yes there are, even though most bars and restaurants come and go at a frantic pace, changing names and menus almost on a weekly basis. We did find something

quite interesting in a relatively new café right in the heart of the Lanes. Two very likely lads, **Steve** and **Jason**, happened up in Brighton four years ago from Liverpool and Nottingham respectively, at the time they were partners in every sense but now they're just business buddies. They opened **LoveFit**, an ingenious new style of eatery in Brighton Square. These boys, who frequent one of the most famous gyms in Hove, are really into the healthy eating scene. Their ethic is *'healthy food with all the crap taken out'*. They serve full breakfasts, for **£5.95**, until 11am plus there are pancakes, waffles and very fresh bread. Lunch features a large range of salads and sandwiches, paninis etc. Drinks are 'guilt-free' coffee (very ethical and Fair Trade etc), the usual range of soft drinks and some quite remarkable smoothies. The cakes, all made on the premises range from carrot, banana to chocolate brownies, all with little sugar or bad fats, brilliant. Their 'house' Lovefit club sarnie was one of the best my partner had ever eaten and he's quite an expert; my chicken and red pesto panini was delicious. The salads being devoured by the large number of lunchers also looked great.

Open seven days a week until 5pm this is a place to watch, their über friendly approach (never mind the bulging muscles and shorts) makes Lovefit a great place. Brighton Square, one of the blots on Brighton's architectural landscape, is improved no end by the arrival of Steve and Jason. This is the fashionable way to eat and enjoy without thinking about your waistline.

So where do you go for the evening? Sometime ago I got into trouble for describing one of the streets of Brighton as being a dead zone and it was. The street in question is Rock Street over in darkest Kemptown. But that was then. In the past few months we've seen no less than two 'new' places open. Not exactly new but the

old I Go Inn has gone, replaced by Chris and Gary's bar/bistro **The Swan** which in less than a year is doing great business. Directly opposite is **The Rock**. The building opened in 1750 as a staging post/coach house almost before Brighton existed. It has undergone many changes over the last 260 years; the latest being by cousins Ben and Josh who took over in July. Ben was the bar manager at the Royal Albion while cousin Josh became an international human rights activist. Now they have revamped this historic pub into a comfortable and very gay friendly place. Situated behind Lewes Crescent, it should attract a very new and interesting crowd. The boys are introducing many new features including a film night, poker league, a book club and that old pub 'favourite' a quiz night.



The building is part of the history of Brighton; it has two bars, free wi-fi and rooms on the first floor which can be used for functions and parties. The cellar has the original 18 century water well and nicely decorated rooms and there's a patio for the smokers. More importantly they're serving local beers with a respectable 'Happy Hour' of 4-8pm Mondays to Fridays and 2-5pm on Saturday. Josh tells me that old fashioned



pub grub will be on offer in due course. In the meantime they're offering food from The Swan over the road. They plan a traditional pub with a twist, get it right and they will have more than a twist. Rock Street is coming back and with another gastro pub re-opening just along the road it is becoming an interesting change from the old haunts in that other village just down the road.

www.rockinnbrighton.co.uk
www.visitbrighton.com/lovefit-cafe

