



Roaming and roving on the cheap

Roger Wheeler - *The roaming pen...*

Now everyone knows that you can travel by public transport for very little money even for free. and the sun shone, sometimes.

I've just discovered Brighton & Hove Buses 'Saver' fares, any way you can save money on the local buses has got to be a good idea. If you take more than one journey on the same day i.e. to the shops and back, the standard fare would be £3.60 for an 'all day' ticket, quite expensive. But if you have access to the internet and our wonderful government tells us that 99% of the population does indeed have such access, then go to the bus company's web site - www.buses.co.uk and there looking thought the ticket options you will find 'Savers' These quite simply are the cheaper tickets. The all day online saver ticket costs just £3.00, thereby saving 60p, not bad, the savings increase if you commute by bus and buy weekly etc season tickets. You simply buy them online, a minimum of five and they get sent to your home within a few days, couldn't be easier. Whilst on the subject of buses, don't forget the National Express cheapies, free return to London or Portsmouth if you have a concessionary pass or just £5.00 for the cheapest 'fun fare'. But if you want to use your pass on any other services you have to ring them. However I now discover that if you are over 60 you get a 50% discount on all fares all over the UK, got go get the coach. By the way I mentioned a couple of months back that Pool Valley would be dug up again soon, well

they've started and once again its out of action. The National Express buses now appear to leave from the bus stops on the islands opposite the Royal Albion Hotel.

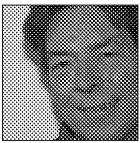
Another useful little tip that has recently come to light in respect of train tickets, the ticket machines at most railway stations do not give you the cheapest fares. If you are travelling by train for any sort of distance then it will almost always be cheaper to buy 'split' tickets. This would not work on Brighton to London, but if you wanted to go to, say, Bristol from Brighton, don't buy a direct fare, book a ticket to Portsmouth Harbour, then another from there to Bristol, total cost £46.00. The ticket machines will sell you a ticket via London Victoria and Paddington at a cost of £128.00. You will have to either buy these split tickets online or at the station ticket office. You have to ask for these tickets, don't forget that the train companies don't want to sell you the cheaper options. Also its worth reminding you of the Advance tickets where you can get from Brighton to Victoria for as little as £3.00 each way.

Last month I was suggesting that 2009 would be the Holiday at England year. A recent survey, don't you just love surveys they tell you everything (or nothing), states that holidays on the continent could cost more than double the price of an equivalent holiday at home. This isn't exactly rocket science as the pound has crashed against the euro, it seems that most tour operators have seen a surge in inquiries for self catering holidays in Britain, one

major tour operator's bookings are up by 20%. The recession doesn't affect all businesses obviously. A question: have you ever been asked to recommend a hotel here in Brighton, I know that I have. It's usually friends or family that you can't or don't want to accommodate at home. As we live here its unlikely that we would ever need to stay in a local hotel and so I am at a complete loss to know what to suggest, apart from the obvious Grand, Hilton Metropole and the other large seafront establishments, which are in the main very expensive. There are about 9,000 hotel beds in Brighton & Hove and I have noticed over the past few years a relative explosion of new 'boutique' hotels. Are these just the seedy old B&Bs or second rate hotels attempting to reinvent themselves with a few colourful pillows and some large white curtains or are they a genuine attempt to give our town something new and stylish, at affordable prices. I'm going to find out and I'll let you know next month.

Another one of these completely pointless surveys has recently discovered that almost half of the UK population did not know that Jersey's currency is Sterling thinking that they used the euro over there. I have frequently had Isle of Man coins or Scottish notes refused when they are completely legal tender; all this proves nothing, apart from our overall ignorance of things that don't really matter that much.

Take it easy out there.



Grumpy old git, Gary

Ginger whinger

Well, wasn't the early part of this month a strange time for weather? At least, it was in Brighton. Snow? We see snow about as often as I get a leg-over these days. (OK, I'm exaggerating obviously, but not by much!)

Still, it was worth it all to be able to tell our grandchildren, etc, that we were there when Brighton copped a packet in the big one of 2009. When the great snow struck, we were not found wanting. In adverse circumstances our true indomitability shone through. Why, at one point I got some snow in my shoe and consequently a wet sock. Did that stop me? No it did not! I may not have made work, but by god I made it to the Barley Mow. (I live in hopes that one day I'll get a free beer for all this publicity I give them. Mind you, I tried the same thing once with

Proto's and the amount of free vegetables I got could be counted on the fingers of Abu Hamza.) Of course, as a smoker I'm quite a hardy outdoor type, accustomed these days to sitting outside getting pissed in all weathers. (Apart from the lovely Barley Mow, where I can sit under a nice warm patio-heater. MMMM! I'm trying hard on this, aren't I?)

At this point, I'd like to introduce an observation. Have you noticed, since the smoking ban, we've had

crap summers and even worse winters? There's an obvious connection here. i.e., all the smoke that used to be contained in the pub is now going into the atmosphere, thus bugging up the climate. So if all you non-smokers care anything about the planet, you should really sit outside while we smokers follow our conscience and stay indoors and ensure there's a future for our descendants. And also maintain that fine institution that is the British pub, after all, is there any finer feeling than a few drinks after work, a good laugh and doing something that's terribly unhealthy? I think not! Which leads me, naturally, to Jamie Oliver. (God, he's an arse, isn't he?) How do we put up with his insufferable preaching about obesity amongst children? He knows nothing about it! He's taken up a cause that doesn't exist. For example, I drive a lot more school buses

than he does. The average ratio of fat kids to others is, I'd say, about 1:4. Not bad, I'd think. (Most teachers I've spoken to agree with this.) So essentially he's a cook, not the saviour of young people sent to this earth to deliver them from fatness. If he wanted to do that, he could start with himself, couldn't he? And now I've got all that off my chest, time to go, I think.

Until the next time.



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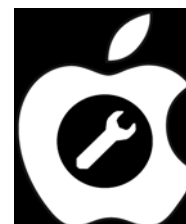
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