

The return of the MOD's

Phil Gallagher

In Brighton over the past couple of months I have noticed a steady revival of the MOD's, a youth sub-culture originating in the 60's.

Brighton has always been at the epicentre of fashion and individualism and every time I see a twenty something cruising past me on the seafront sporting a khaki green parka jacket and quadrophenia style lights on a vintage Lambretta scooter I can't help but beam a big smile as they disappear into the distance in a cloud of thick two-stroke smoke. The reason is this; we seem to live in a High Street retail society where everything appears exclusive but in reality it's not. Every time I step out onto West Street or St. James's street it's a sea of brightly coloured cardigans, skinny jeans and pointy shoes. High Street chain-store retailers pride themselves on selling individual cutting edge clothes for the mass market, but let's be honest some of it is utter dross and a couple of years down the line since launching this new "alternative fashion" it's no longer individual or cutting edge. Bands nower days seem to promote the shaggy un-kept image with their oversized clothes and "out of bed look" hair, and I can't help but feel they won't age well. If you look back a few years at The Beatles, Elvis and The Rolling Stones (to name but a few) I believe in 50 years they will still look like rock stars and will still look cool. I find myself for the first time frantically looking for vintage 60's clothing and googleing Fred Perry and Ben Sherman, after all whatever happened to smart casual? I'm not even sure it exists anymore. I say lets go back to sharp haircuts and Harrington jackets. I'm bored with the indy sub-culture and Britain can once again be the envy of the fashion world if we would just stop pretending to be American all the time and remember who we are.

Everything in the garden

Corrina Slow

July is a time for enjoying the garden and reaping the benefits of spring time efforts. If your garden however, is little more than a concrete patch or overgrown with brambles you might wish you'd got stuck in earlier. It's never too late to bring life to your patch and a little tarting up can give you a place you can enjoy over summer without attempting a massive overhaul. Here are some tart it up tips for two under loved gardens:

The concrete patch

Give your yard a good sweep up and mop-down, getting rid of any rubbish and collected items of miscellany that have found themselves into the garden.

Fill a few decent sized pots with flowering plants from the garden centre (plan ahead next year and you can grow from seed or seedlings, which is much cheaper). Place the pots in groups to create a green feel, spreading the pots around too thinly won't give the same impact, if your stretched for money (who isn't) choose one sunny area to fill up and make this the place you sit in or see from your window.

If you've got a stark empty space try to soften it with planters on the walls, by painting an ugly wall a new colour or hanging mirrors. Try scavenging reclamation yards for objects that will make exciting planters or garden sculptures.

Have some water in the garden. Try blocking up the drain hole in an old butler sink and turn it into a mini pond.

Make your garden come to life at night by hanging tea lights and using small solar lights.



If you get very little sun move your solar lights into the best sun to charge up during the day.

The bramble patch

Get out and mow the lawn but set the mower blades high so that you don't cut the lawn too short or it will end up brown and damaged. Once you've cut it keep on top of it and water the lawn in spells of hot dry weather.

Get an old blanket for throwing down on the lawn and spend as much time as you dare dosing on it! Attack the weeds taking care to look out for any plants you like - perhaps ask a friend who knows their dandelions from their dahlias to help.

Most large shrubs that have already flowered this year can be pruned back, those with flower buds forming or in flower should be left to do their thing. After you've blitzed the grass, weeds and shrubs you may be left with a bit of an empty feel. Any plants you left in the beds will thrive once freed from the choking weeds and you can fill any other gaps with some annuals in flower. If you've got pots in flower you can stand them in the beds to give temporary colour.

As with the concrete garden you should chose an area to focus on and put some seating here as well as filling up some pots.

And finally... Don't let your wishes for a beautiful garden stop you enjoying what you have, get a barbecue and get out! Next month I'll be writing about how to design your ideal space so no worrying 'till then...



Roaming around fashionable Kemptown

Roger Wheeler – *The roaming pen...*

Kemptown has always been fashionable. The Regency Bucks of the early nineteenth century were famous for their 'foppish' clothes, wild parties and generally very louche lifestyle. If you look around today, things are not that different.

There have been many famous residents attracted by our sub-city culture and atmosphere. We all know the famous names, Laurence Olivier, Dora Bryan, Flora Robson, Max Miller, Maisie Trollette, Will Young. The list is long and covers every possible profession even the oldest one.

A new biography of Douglas Byng 'Bawdy but British' by Patrick Newley tells the story of one of the greatest names in British light entertainment, who lived on Arundel Terrace.

His may not be a name that springs to mind to anyone under 50. He was a comedian, actor, revue artist, prolific songwriter and legendary pantomime Dame. His humour, sophisticated, witty and often risqué won him a legion of fans and he was once described as 'the highest priest of camp'.

In the 1920s and 30s he was London's highest paid cabaret artiste entertaining Royalty and 'the smart set' nightly at such venues as The Café de Paris. Noel Coward described his act as 'the most refined vulgarity in London' whilst James Agate wrote of

Byng's performances were 'not just near the knuckle – they are the knuckle itself'.

Dougie Byng lived in the ground floor flat of 6 Arundel Terrace; he died in August 1987 at the age of 94. Brighton & Hove Buses have even named a bus after him. Lets not forget dear Patrick Kinna who died in March aged 95; he lived in Sussex Square and loved to talk about his years as Winston Churchill's secretary right through the war. Kemptown is today as fashionable as it ever was, maybe even more so. The arrival of the movie world's latest 'wunderkind' young O Nathapon, from Thailand, has brought a new talent to the heart of Kemptown.

He has just launched his film directorial debut in Brighton, a film called 'A moment in June'. He hopes for a National release for his film at the end of the year. Educated at Brighton College, he spent five years at a film school in LA and is now back in town. This rising star has just completed his first short film for Channel 4, has a new feature film, as they say, 'in development'. He directs music videos for Sony Music Thailand, and is truly big in the far East and only 29 years old. It looks as though Kemptown is still attracting talent from across the world.

The very latest fashionable addition to our village is

MetroDeco, a great new tea room on Upper St James Street; this really is a decadent tea experience. Opened on 31 May they offer no less than 18 different blends of tea, all personally blended by the proprietors. The fabulous homemade cakes are all from local small bakers. The furniture is genuine 1920's and is for sale, they have rooms downstairs, all furnished in quite lavish 'deco' style which are on offer for parties. They have a liquor license but chose just to serve champagne, which says it all. Take it easy out there and stay fashionable.

