



Sunday in the park with George*

Roger Wheeler – *The roaming pen...*

'It's Sunday morning, where shall we go, it's a lovely day'. I know I have said that many times without thinking, 'hey. We live in one of the loveliest places in Britain, so let's go to the park' - what? I hear you cry, the park!!!!

Brighton & Hove Council says that we have no less than 98 parks and public open spaces and 6,000 hectares (14,000 acres) of countryside, quite a statistic. How many can you name and, more to the point, how many have you actually visited. Preston and Queens possibly, Hove perhaps, what about Hove Recreation Ground, how about the Rockery, opposite Preston Park, the fabulous 'willow pattern' inspired garden built by Canadian soldiers during the War whilst waiting to embark on the ill-fated Dieppe Raid in 1942. East Brighton Park is a gem, leading as it does up towards the Race Course and over to Ovingdean across the golf course. Let's not forget Stanmer Park, formerly home of the Earls of Chichester, a wonderful area next to Sussex University where you can walk for miles and see some of the more beautiful scenery in Brighton and hardly anyone there.

Apparently, if you are to believe the Council, there are 90 more like this, I am sure they are right; some of these parks and open spaces must be very small and I won't even attempt the pointless task of trying to name them all.

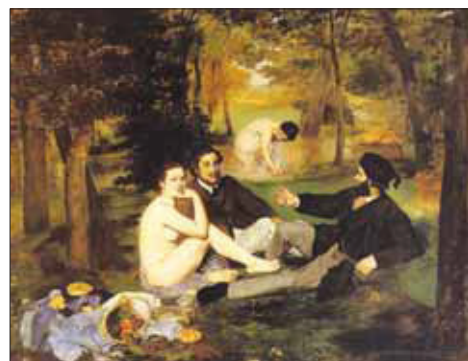
We obviously just don't like our parks enough, some are great, some not quite so.. They are always popular with dogs and their owners, plus these days

the ubiquitous 'dog walkers' the many people who are making a living walking other peoples dogs. Sadly you have to watch where you walk; there are still a lot of people who seem unable to recognise how anti-social it is to allow their dogs to foul the parks without picking it up.

The Undercliff Walk is becoming more and more popular these days, from the Marina to Saltdean, just over two miles. No hills but loads of bikes, you just need to be aware and I have found the cyclists to be very considerate. The Coach at Rottingdean is a lovely pub to pause at, so long as you don't mind paying London prices for a pint, how they can charge nearly £3.00 for a pint of Harvey's is curious, I wonder who actually pays it. Wetherspoon's at the Marina are much more sensible with the price of a decent pint at £1.99 and sometimes even less. The café at Ovingdean is a gem, tea and cakes at very reasonable prices.

There are many reasons to take a walk in the park, a recent survey (yes I know there are too many surveys) said that keeping fit by joining expensive gyms and indulging in pointless exercises was a total waste of money. All you need is a brisk 30 minute walk three times a week. We, apparently, all live quite close to a park, or even the seafront lawns, so off we go – walkies.

* Stephen Sondheim's musical 'Sunday in the Park with George', was inspired by the wonderful painting by Georges Seurat, a pity it wasn't Manet's 'Le déjeuner sur l'herbe' now that would have made a musical.



A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte - Georges Seurat



Le déjeuner sur l'herbe - Edouard Manet

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