



Roaming around the marina and other places

Roger Wheeler – *The roaming pen...*

Autumn draws on but we can still remember those few brief days that we called summer.

Walking down to the Marina these days has become quite a pleasure, thanks in the main to the efforts of one local resident. You will recall that the upper walk of the Kemp Town Slopes was really not very nice at all. The large bushes had become extremely overgrown; garbage was everywhere never mind about the large colony of rats that had made it their home. And after dark, well its best not to even think about it. Today we have a very pleasant promenade with some lovely colourful planting, new gravel underfoot, all the bushes are gone and so are the rats. In fact we can be very happy to stroll along and it is all due to the efforts of one man.

A local and undoubtedly well meaning conservation society has been claiming the credit for this when in fact they did nothing at all; neither did our local

councillors who are also claiming the credit. No one really minds who actually got this vital bit of renovation done, but I just think that credit should be given to the extremely modest man, who actually set it all in train. He comments that this will only work if it is kept up and has even volunteered to join a working party to look after the terrace. He initially contacted Brighton & Hove City Parks and thanks to them and his persistence we have something really nice. It just goes to show that one small voice can make a difference.

Anyone who was walking down that way during September will have been stopped by a very pleasant lady with a clipboard enquiring of our views on the Marina redevelopment plans. Oh no, I thought, not another committee against something new. But in fact she appeared to be gathering names on a petition in favour of removing most of the hideous buildings



and car parks that scar the Marina. The plans just need a bit more imagination she said. So I signed, 'bring it on' was my cry.

I was amazed to learn that planning permission has been granted for the harbour redevelopment and the new tower blocks of flats, great stuff. Brighton and Hove City Council actually doing something that will benefit the town.

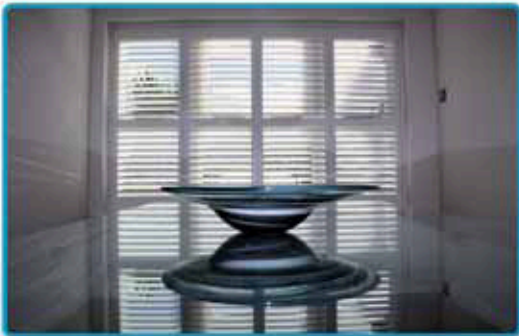
Did anyone get quietly irritated by the organisers of the 'White Air Festival' in September? They closed Madeira Drive for three days; nothing particularly unusual in that but to close half of the pavement on Marine Parade was a step too far. There was virtually no publicity, the Red Arrows performed their amazing routine to a few surprised onlookers - me included - on the Friday. The whole event appeared to be a bit of a mess, basically a recruiting drive by the RAF. Then much to my disbelief I discover that rather than Brighton benefiting the City Council paid them to come here. Unbelievable, particularly when the Council refuses to allow the Pride event in August to use the sea front but insist on taking £300,000 to use Preston Park.

Remember remember the 5th of November. This year the good burghers of Lewes want to stop most people visiting the town for the annual bonfire night celebrations. Over the past few years it has become rather chaotic and so now there will be no extra trains and the town centre will be virtually sealed off for most of the day. In some ways it's a pity, but they are the victims of their own success. When I first went, way back in the 60's, it was all great fun, and for years I wouldn't have missed it for anything. But times change and the media and the internet has meant that everyone knows and wants to be there. On a note of history, Lewes Bonfire Boys are in part commemorating the 17 Protestant martyrs burnt at the stake in the town between 1555 and 1557 by Henry VIII's Catholic daughter Mary. So this pre-dates Mr Fawkes by 50 years. Lewes is too small to accommodate 50,000+ revellers and so it has to be almost closed to outsiders, it's a pity but that's life. *Take it easy out there.*

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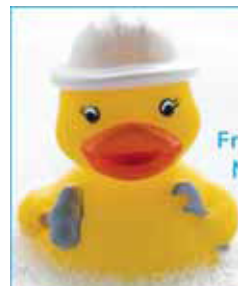
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