



The Roaming Pen: Its time to start roaming around

Roger Wheeler

At last Spring is actually here, we have been expecting it for weeks, it was probably delivered by Royal Mail so the delay is unsurprising.

The daffodils and primroses are everywhere and everyone feels a bit better, well at least I do. And to add to my unbounded joy the traveller encampment has, at long last, gone from the Kemp Town Slopes. I counted no less than 42 caravans and associated vehicles parked along the road and on the grass. They come and go on a regular basis seemingly completely immune from all local regulations and traffic restrictions. I wonder if you or I were to take our cars, remove one of the wooden posts and park them on the grass slopes how long it would be before they were duly ticketed and towed away, not long I suspect. I don't know if anyone can give me a good reason why the travelling community are allowed complete freedom to ignore all the many rules that we, the ordinary and long suffering tax payers, have to abide by.

I fully respect this community's right to roam wherever they wish and live a lifestyle outside what we would call the 'norm'. But by the same token they should respect my right to live in a civilised and regulated society. Of course the driveways of Brighton and Hove would be in a very poor state of repair without them or maybe not. They appear to contribute nothing to society and although the local authorities throughout the country are required to offer them permanent sites, these are ignored as it means that they would have to make some sort of financial contribution.

The area around Black Rock is used, I am told, as a gathering point for them before they move off to

attend to the needs of our neighbours across the Channel. Bonne chance à le peuple de Normandie. As I write they have moved from Black Rock up Wilson Avenue to Race Hill.

On to happier things, a few days ago I took one of the longest bus rides that Brighton buses offer, the 2A from Steyning to Rottingdean. I have never done this before and possibly never will again, but that's not to say that it's incredible value for money. The journey takes about an hour and 45 minutes and takes you through some of our loveliest local scenery plus bits of inner Shoreham that no one really needs to see.

It was a beautiful spring day and Steyning was looking truly lovely, we are very lucky in Sussex to have some of the prettiest villages and countryside that England has to offer. Along the other side of the South Downs, now the latest National Park, drive along the A27 and we have Glynde, Firle, Selmeston, Ripe, Alciston and not forgetting the tourist trap of them all, Alfriston. A little further and you will find Wilmington guarded by the Long Man which they say has been there since Neolithic times.

We went over to Wilmington a few weeks ago for a very good reason. Two of our oldest friends have been running one of the County's best restaurants there for 23 years. For ten years from 1976 David and Clive used to own The Fig Leaf in Waterloo Street, Hove, one of the towns finest eateries. People would trek miles for one of David's seafood pancakes and they still do. But today they have to go just a bit further, to Crossways at Wilmington, just 17 miles from Brighton.

Crossways is a lovely Georgian house, once the home of Elizabeth David, the author of the seminal

book on food 'An Omelette and a Glass of Wine'. So good cooking is a tradition at Crossways, now classed as a 'restaurant with rooms' of which they have seven extremely comfortable ones. David is still overseeing the kitchen and Clive still welcoming the guests with his very slightly knowing smile. When we were last there another party announced that they had been coming to eat David's food and enjoy Clive's banter regularly since 1981 having followed them from Hove. Even though they had moved to the north of England they felt the trip was always worth it. The four course set price dinner – there is no a la carte – is only £39.95 and the full overnight with a great breakfast is £89 each, it really is the ideal place for a treat. I have written more about David and Clive on my website www.theroamingpen.co.uk, they are really worth a visit. Wilmington village with its 12th Century church and priory and, of course, the Long Man, merit the trip alone. The local pub, The Giant's Rest, serves a mean pint of Harvey's Bitter and some very decent pub grub. We really should get out more. *Take it easy and keep it green.*



Greens welcome community swimming pool revamp

Green party councillors have welcomed proposals to revamp the popular Victorian swimming pool at St Luke's School near Queen's Park.

Brighton and Hove Council have published a wish-list of improvements they'd like to see at the pool - which serves people living in the area as well as pupils from schools around the city, and attracts more than 60,000 visitors a year.

Local Green Party councillor Ben Duncan said the way St Luke's Pool was used by the community was a model that could be rolled out across the city. He said: "This is great news - a full refurbishment of this much-loved local pool is long overdue.

"St Luke's pool is an excellent example of how we should be opening up facilities built by schools to wider communities - and encouraging people to use our network of schools around the city as hubs for taking part in cultural, sporting and educational activities right in the neighbourhoods."

The 100-year-old changing rooms (once classrooms) will be improved, offering private cubicles as well as family rooms, new facilities for disabled swimmers will be installed and the reception area will be improved.

Laying down the law: With care

Patrick Richards

In the first of this series of articles on care for the elderly I outlined the statutory framework which sets how and by whom formal decisions should be made by and on behalf of adults whose mental capacity to make their own decisions is in doubt.

In this, my third article on caring for the elderly with dementia, I aim to elaborate on the unwitting pitfalls befitting those wonderful private carers with little or no access to practical advice. In a recent edition of The Independent there appeared a thought provoking letter from a spokesperson from the Alzheimer's Society urging family carers to "go with the flow, however bizarre it seems" and to persevere as long as they can before surrendering their bewildered loved one to an expensive or unsatisfactory care home. Physical exhaustion and exasperation can lead to hasty, unwise or individually motivated mistakes. Regrettably, the compensation culture and two recessions of the last fifteen or so years have brought the worst out of the more remote beneficiaries whose motive is financial rather than welfare. I read somewhere else for instance that one in ten Wills of reasonable wealth, is being challenged.

I alluded to the statutory framework, preserved common law principles, Codes of Practice etc encapsulated in The Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Just what degree of "duty of care" do families, carers, professionals, indeed the Courts, owe? There are core principles, colloquially now referred to as the "section 4 best interests check list". Subsection (9) protects the decision maker who has reasonably adopted the methodology. It is also important to observe the five guiding principles in section 1, underlying the ethos and humanity of the Act, which after all is designed not only to protect the vulnerable but to maximise their ability to participate in decision making. How strenuous do those steps have to be to facilitate communication? Is the carer addressing a single decision or a range? Again, the answer is in the Act"... all practical steps..." The Code complements this approach by providing a number of minimum pointers.

Confused?!

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