



## The Roaming Pen... What's in a word?

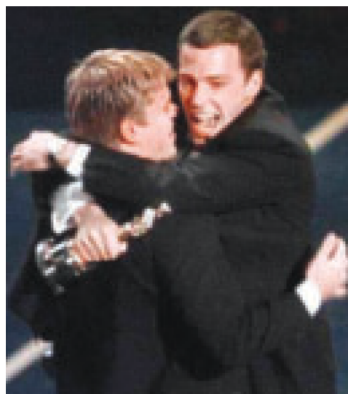
**Last month I wrote about the word 'community' hoping to promote a debate on the subject, much to my surprise it seems that most people agreed with my thoughts on the subject. A friend suggested that I should discuss Margaret Thatcher's famous comment about society – 'there is no such thing' – but I'll leave that for another day.**

The English language is one of the richest in the world but it is frequently misused, or is it? Any language must evolve or it dies, despite the fact that many of us who cling to the traditional usage of words. Language is a fascinating subject; it is after all the main way humans communicate.

I was fascinating to learn that the latest edition of the New American Oxford Dictionary has just published its third edition with 2,000 new words and phrases. Of course we have always known that American English is a different language to that spoken on this side of the pond. In many ways it is the new English and whether we like it or not it will ensure the long term survival of English. But it is interesting to see what has now made it into this worthy volume.

Twenty years overdue Lipstick Lesbians are now official. Talk the talk, what's not to like?, wardrobe malfunction (no credit given to Janet Jackson though) tweet, the new black, social networking and my personal favourite LMAO are now officially part of the American English language. LBD and BFF also make it, confused? LBD – Little Black Dress, BFF – Best Friends Forever and LMAO is simply Laughing My A\*\*\* Off. Bromance is another that is now officially recognised; it simply means the close, non sexual, relationship between two men. Brad Pitt and George Clooney, Ben Affleck and Matt Damon are said to have the original bromances, definitely not gay but very close. The word was coined only 20 years ago but, it would seem, to be in common use in the States. Aristotle's classical description of friendship is often taken to be the prototype of the bromance. He wrote around 300 BC, "It is those who desire the good of their friends for the friends' sake that are most truly friends, because each loves the other for what he is, and not for any incidental quality". Fascinating how language develops, innit?

This is all very intriguing and in a way does help us



understand our American cousins a little better. I love the way they insist on pronouncing pasta as parsta and every country in the Middle East with an extra a, eg Afganistaan or Pakistaan. It was either Oscar Wilde or George Bernard Shaw, or maybe both, who said that America and England were two nations divided by a common language or even that we have everything in common with the Americans except the language.

Back to more local issues and as anticipated Brighton & Hove Buses have increased their fares maintaining their position as the most expensive bus company in the country. But in a surprise move I hear that the city council has halved the cost of parking, now parking on the seafront is down to just 60p per hour and £4.00 for nine hours until 31st March 2011. Still the best travel value fare is the Southern DaySave £10.00 tickets that take you anywhere on the entire Southern network.

There are a couple of new exhibitions in London that could be worth a look at using a £10.00 ticket. The V&A is always worth a visit, currently it is running no less than ten special exhibitions, from the Raphael Cartoons from the Sistine Chapel to the history of the Ballets Russes. This exhibition showcases the glamour and magic of Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. A larger than life personality, Diaghilev's artists included George Balanchine, Robert Delaunay, Vaslav Nijinsky, Anton Dolin and Pablo Picasso. He even slept with quite a few of them. Back to Brighton and November brings us the old favourites of the traditional Lewes Bonfire Celebrations and the Lions Fireworks Display at the County Cricket Ground on the same day, yes the 5th. Sunday the 7th brings the Old Crocks – sorry the Veteran Car Run, as it likes to be called and on Sunday 21st yet another race. This time it's the Brooks (the running shoe people) 10Km race along the seafront. Brighton seems to have cornered the market in City running races these days with the ever popular Sussex Beacon half marathon in February. Then we have the major Brighton Marathon on 10th April which is now fully subscribed with 10,000 general runners and 5,000 charity entrants it looks like its time I got my running shoes on.

*Take it easy and watch out for stray runners.*

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## Down the Rabbit Hole

rey towns there is a curious network of lines. These lines are perfectly straight and run for miles and miles, linking hill-forts, forest clumps, old stones, holy wells and any place of sanctity. After marvelling at the intricacy of this vision for few moments, the time-barrier returns and again, you see modern Britain.

Back in 1921, a Hereford merchant called Alfred Watkins momentarily perceived the countryside in exactly this way. It was not until the middle of the 'hippy' era and the publication of an unusual book called 'The View over Atlantis', that his experience and subsequent research became widely known. The book awakened a spiritual fascination in the world under our feet, broadly known as the 'earth mysteries' movement.

It was derided by some and ignored by many, but was nevertheless hugely influential in New Age circles and helped attract crowds of truth-seekers and free spirits to the village (and festival) of Glastonbury.

It was discovered by many that the relics of ancient civilizations were not randomly strewn across the landscape, but laid out with amazing accuracy. This indicated that prehistoric people were nothing like the ignorant barbarians that we had been led to believe they were. Among the surprisingly varied and interconnected topics in the book are UFOs, sacred geometry, feng shui, and of course, these mysterious alignments - ley-lines.

The term 'ley-line' has never really impacted upon the mainstream consciousness. In case you have never heard of it, I shall summarise the concept:

Earth is a living being, like a human being. All living beings have an etheric life-force running through them along a network of channels or lines. Acupuncture works because needles are inserted wherever a channel is blocked, maintaining the healthy flow of life-force (or qi). The earth, being alive, has these channels, too. Some theorise that the ancients had knowledge of this and that the many ancient monuments in the world (standing stones, pyramids, temples, mounds) are akin to huge acupuncture needles, manipulating the earth's life-force. In fact, they say the evidence is all around us in the many precise alignments of ancient pagan and spiritual sites.

The idea of these ley-line alignments is criticised by those who argue that you can easily find chance alignments between any random points on a map. Perhaps, though, the notion of ley-lines should not be dismissed so readily. All over the world there are clues that point to there being truth in it. Why do lines on the high plain of western Bolivia run absolutely straight for up to twenty miles, regardless of the uneven, mountainous landscape? What is the purpose of the common British linear features known as cursuses that can extend for miles and often point to sacred sites? Is there any connection between the mythic Irish 'fairy paths', which follow straight lines, the ancient Chinese belief that spirits travel along straight lines and the aboriginal Australians who follow invisible 'song lines' left by their ancestors to help them navigate the land?

Why not do some ley-line hunting of your own? All you need is an ordnance survey map (preferably 1:25,000 scale) a long ruler and a very sharp pencil. See if you can find alignments of ancient monuments such as standing stones, tumuli, hill-forts and old churches. Supposedly, churches often lie on ley-lines, because placing Christian worship places directly atop more ancient sacred sites was seen to be one of the quickest ways to convert a reluctant pagan population.

A well known local ley-line runs vertically through the Long Man of Wilmington crossing a church, a priory, and two burial mounds in quick succession. So, next time you are travelling towards Polegate along the A27, look to your right and spare a thought for our enigmatic ancestors and consider an alternative view of our countryside.

Continue down the rabbit hole at [www.joshuafrrench.info](http://www.joshuafrrench.info)

## Simon Kirby MP and ME

**Members of the Sussex ME Society have met with Brighton MP, Simon Kirby who recently became a Patron to the charity.**

Discussions included the NHS specialist services for ME in the area and the need for substantial funding from the Primary Care Trusts of Sussex to maintain and develop these vital services. Also concerns were expressed about

the government's planned changes to the welfare system particularly sickness and disability benefits. Mr Kirby is looking forward to working with the organisation for the good of people affected with Myalgic Encephalopathy or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome that affects over 6,000 adults and children across the county including an increasing number in Kemptown some of whom are virtually housebound and in need of care.

support from A Taste of Sussex.



### LONG MAN OF WILMINGTON LEY, Sussex

