



The Roaming Pen... It's a wonderful town

We are fortunate to live in one of the most exiting places in the country; nothing stands still for long in Brighton. Only last month we were celebrating, if that's the word, the reopening of The Swan Restaurant in Rock Street.

Now we have a new bread shop, the Real Patisserie, has opened along in St George's Road where there was once an estate agent. The popularity of 'artisan' bread is relatively new; just along the road we have Artisan another new bread shop-cum-deli. The products on offer in these new businesses are undoubtedly delicious if a little pricey I just hope that there is sufficient demand. Forfar's has been there for many years as has The Kemp Town Deli, Cunningham's and Brampton's all selling artisan bread and we should not forget the good old Co-Op. Even Kemp Town's most expensive greengrocer – Proto – sells artisan bread. The small independent shops and restaurants make Kemp Town what it is, an interesting and almost bohemian village, I do hope it stays that way.

We currently have two golden opportunities right on our doorstep, let's see what happens. I refer to the possible development of the 60 meter high Brighton O wheel which has just received temporary planning consent for a site known as Dalton's Bastion, it's the area just east of the Palace Pier opposite The Terraces. It was originally planned to be next to the West Pier but it was thought that it would distract from the i360, remember that? The Cabinet councillor for culture David Smith said: "Such an attraction could help sustain visitors, which is crucial in a recession. People coming to the wheel could be expected to spend their money in neighbouring businesses as well. It has potential to put to good use an otherwise vacant part of the seafront." Wise words indeed but let's not forget that this is Brighton, we love big ideas and get very excited, form committees to oppose them and then we let them slip quietly away, to be spoken of only wistfully of what might have been.

The next of our council's 'Grand Projects' is the long awaited development of the Black Rock site. The wonderful art deco swimming pool that was built in 1936 was demolished in 1978 and since then this prime site has laid unused and unloved, a true blot on the landscape. The plans approved in 2006 for the 8,000 seat Brighton International Arena, with all its wonderful Olympic ice 'pads' whatever they are, countless facilities for indoor sports plus affordable housing, went the way of all the other grand ideas that we have. Quietly shelved and forgotten. Now we have, at last, some real movement, its going to be a coach park! We can't wait.

We are overlooking a very interesting and quite important part that this derelict site has played in the cultural life of the City. Yes I do mean culture. For the past few years the walls all around the site have been used by our local graffiti or street artists as they should more correctly be called. Street Art has become a world-wide phenomenon, it has got something of a bad name because of the mindless 'tagging' and unpleasant daubing that adorn many walls and public spaces throughout our major cities. But today street art has really come of age and quite a lot of it is really quite good and some can be called art. You only have to stroll along Regent Street in the centre of town to see some fantastic examples, there is more in Circus Street, in fact Brighton has more than its fair share of urban artists who bring colour and interest to some of our otherwise drab surroundings. Even the august Tate Modern allowed its building to be graffiti'd. And I haven't even mentioned Banksy.

Now here is a plan. We have this site at Black Rock with, possibly, the longest uninterrupted fence/wall in the town which could be used as The National Graffiti Centre. For minimal cost the wall could be painted white and the artists allowed and even encouraged to indulge their talent. Once a month there could be a competition and the winner entered into possibly an annual contest or exhibition, the winning entry being left in-situ. By their very nature street artists do not want to be regulated and usually wish to be anonymous. Such a venture as this would have to be self-regulated with one of the many well known artists checking on the suitability and standard of the work. This could attract quite a lot of national interest and even sponsorship; it certainly has not been done anywhere else. Many local authorities actively encourage street artists to cover derelict buildings there are even professional agencies to encourage and support the genre. Brighton is the ideal place for such an initiative. It need not interfere with the money spinning coach park either. I started this article by stating that nothing stands still for long or does it, we love new ideas but seem to hate doing anything serious about them. I'll be starting a campaign on my website www.theroamingpen.co.uk let's see if we can really make a difference this time.

Take it easy and make sure you enjoy yourself, it's never too late.

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A Festival with a Fringe on top

Roger Wheeler

My feelings about the main Brighton Festival becoming too highbrow for most people have been echoed by many; however the wonderful Fringe Festival has rescued the whole ethic of festival. The 82 page programme has hundreds of events, shows, cabarets, music, literally covering just about every form of art imaginable. From the amazing Lady Boys of Bangkok, in the pavilion on the Victoria Gardens to an Introductory Talk on the Buteyko method at the Brighton Natural Health Centre. The range of shows and exhibitions is quite mind blowing catering for all tastes and ages, it's certainly worth a look. There are dozens of free events like the Circus on Jubilee Square on 21st May and a fascinating event called 'Crowdshare: Do you dare to share?' on 28th May at a secret location. So don't worry if the main 'Festival' is not for you The Fringe will have something to your taste. It's in its fifth year and is now the third largest fringe festival in the World. Tickets all seem to be quite reasonably priced, where they aren't free, and are available online, by phone or at The Dome Box Office.

www.brightonfestivalfringe.org.uk

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The stars are out - May 2011

★ **TAURUS: The Bull** (21 April - 21 May)

You begin to have doubts about what you are told by a friend but if they are holding something back they have their reasons. Tolerance and sympathy are what is called for in this situation, not judgment. The initials LV have significance for you in a matter concerning finance. Lucky day Friday.

★ **GEMINI: The Twins** (22 May - 21 June)

Plans you had settled in your mind will get changed around you. Be prepared and ready to be flexible. You may even find yourself with some free time you didn't expect - make the most of it! Midweek is the best time for a flutter this month. Don't go overboard though - you won't need too!

★ **CANCER: The Crab** (22 June - 22 July)

The full Moon on the 17th will be especially lucky for you Cancer. Expect things to go well and they will! You might find yourself centre of attention this month; step up and take the applause! Friends and family will keep you from getting too big-headed! The number 4 will be significant.

★ **LEO: The Lion** (23 July - 23 Aug)

You'll be riding along on the crest of a wave this month Leo! Things will be going so swimmingly you will want to get as far as you can before the wave breaks. Just beware that you don't over-extend yourself - you aren't the only one who can get that job done so be ready to delegate. Spring should be an especially lucky time for you - enjoy!

★ **VIRGO: The Virgin** (24 Aug - 23 Sept)

You have been through an intense time recently and by now you will have realized that clamming up and shutting out your friends is not the answer, at least hopefully you will have. If not then open up to them now and surprise yourself how well they respond. A mid-week gamble may bring a welcome improvement in your circumstances!

★ **LIBRA: The Scales** (24 Sept - 23 Oct)

This month is all about relationships Libra and you won't be in control. Fortunately your natural understanding will mean you are the best sign to bring harmony. Let others be stubborn and resistant to compromise, a concession or two will put things back in balance - just where you like them! The letter D will feature significantly in a communication.

★ **SCORPIO: The Scorpion** (24 Oct - 23 Nov)

It's a good thing you can be determined this month Scorpio as 'best laid plans' etc. Not to worry, you are more than capable of coping. Take a deep breath and get stuck in! A spot of innovative short-cut taking will help things along. Don't neglect a relationship in all the hustle, it could be the respite you will need.

★ **SAGITTARIUS: The Archer** (24 Nov - 21 Dec)

Aren't YOU the interesting one this month! Friends will want to be in YOUR orbit but that doesn't mean you have to include them in everything you do. New and interesting people are out there just waiting to meet you and this is a great time to do that. Someone with an S in their name will gravitate toward you.

★ **CAPRICORN: The Goat** (22 Dec - 20 Jan)

There is disruption and chaos at home right now, isn't there? This condition is SO not where you want to be! Be careful not to take any tensions with you when you step outside your front door as it could follow you to work - and you don't need that! The good news is that by the end of this month either it will all have been settled or it will be well on the way.

★ **AQUARIUS: The Water-Bearer** (21 Jan - 19 Feb)

Your idealistic intellect is getting a real workout this month with new ideas and challenges stretching you like a ten-mile run! You will be in your element here and enjoying the mental stimulation to the full! The end of the month will have special significance for you, perhaps pertaining to a relationship. Lucky day Saturday.

★ **PISCES: The Fish** (20 Feb - 20 Mar)

This is going to be a good time for anyone rattling a charity tin under your nose this month as you will be feeling the influence of Neptune, the planet of Universal love. Your natural compassion will be heightened, as will your desire to help those less fortunate. Just remember you can't help everyone so think about where your caring is most needed.

★ **ARIES: The Ram** (21 Mar - 20 April)

April was a time of mixed fortunes for you Aries but now we are in May you will find things really begin to come together. Relationships that were holding you back will have less influence and you will be able to make headway towards your goals. Wait until after the weekend to make any important decisions.

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