



The Roaming Pen... It's a radical summer

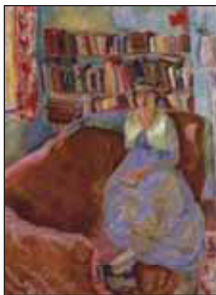
Well the Brighton Festival came and went, did we enjoy it? Some did but most local people were left rather unmoved, I overheard a comment on the bus from one young woman to another "what's all this festival rubbish about anyway", that just about summed up most people's opinion. Not everyone's naturally. We had our 15 year old niece to stay for the final weekend and she was totally fazed by the sheer volume of things to see and do. She was quite bemused at wandering around someone's bedroom looking at the art whilst they were cleaning, sitting in the Garden of Rest watching As You Like It with a picnic in very chilly weather – excellent as always – and going to see the exhibition of the Bloomsbury Group's post-impressionist paintings at the museum.

The word radical and Brighton Museum are rarely to be seen in the same sentence, however until the 9th October the museum is running an exhibition called 'Radical Bloomsbury'. Although calling the show radical is really only half of the picture. It's an exhibition of the work of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant who lived for many years at Charleston, near Firle, just 14 miles west of Brighton. Charleston Farmhouse is a charming, rather quirky house set in lovely grounds just off the A27, its open to the public and run by a charity. Enough of the official line, what is just below the surface though is the facts of the rather exotic

domestic 'arrangements' that existed in the house. Even by the standards of 2011 the love lives of the inhabitants were slightly unusual. Duncan Grant was an active homosexual who numbered artist Roger Fry, his cousin Lytton Strachey and the highly influential economist John Maynard Keynes among his lovers. He was already a famous artist when he met Vanessa Bell, who was then living with her husband Clive and their two sons (keep up at the back) and their friendship soon became very intense. He moved in with them and soon after they set up home in Charleston. Now it gets complicated, Vanessa had a child by Duncan, who was still having lots of fun with his male lovers. Clive came and went with his mistress, Mary Hutchinson, it all seems very civilised and I haven't even mentioned Virginia Woolf's involvement. She lived close by in Rodmell and although happily married had a brief lesbian affair with Vita Sackville-West. The story is fascinating and gives a greater depth and understanding when looking at the



Charleston House



The art of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant

paintings Duncan and Vanessa produced which are now on display at Brighton Museum. It's very rare for Brighton residents to get a discount for anything but for this exhibition, if you take proof of address with you, it is half price at £3.00.

To more mundane matters, regular readers will know of my views on Brighton & Hove Buses, expensive and not very reliable. No doubt we are all very excited by the arrival on route 7 of the new talking buses, or maybe not. Useful in London where a large number of passengers may not be local and the vast number of routes and destinations can be mind boggling. But do we really need to be constantly informed that we can 'alight' (sweet old fashioned word, meaning get off) here at Gala Bingo Hall,

Lidl Superstore etc. Possibly handy for about 10% of users for the rest of us it becomes tedious. But they are now all geared up for the introduction of Brighton's very own version of the Oyster card; this really should bring benefits and speed the service up.

Talking about travel deals, I recently discovered that if you have an Oyster Card then you can get discounts on rail travel throughout the country. Interesting. National Rail enquiries is where you look for that one. The old favourite Advance Tickets are still the best value for money when taking the train although Southern's DaySave at £12.00 is excellent value, you can't use it until after 10.00, whereas First Capital Connect day cards are £15.00 can be used earlier, but not to Victoria but London Bridge and beyond. They don't like making things easy!

It's July, not many dates for your diary, you can paddle round the pier on the 3rd, you can bike from London to Brighton in the Capital to Coast Bike ride on the 10th and there's the Critical Mass Bike Ride on the 29th, so there's no excuse not to get on your bike.

Take it easy out there and enjoy yourselves while you're still in the pink!

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The stars are out – July 2011

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

A partner or friend may be taking advantage here and it won't help either of you to allow it to continue. The full moon on the 15th would be a good time to settle things and get your relationship back on balance. The letter J will have special significance.

★ LEO: The Lion (23 July - 23 Aug)

You may be full of enthusiasm for an idea and it may seem just the ticket but beware of going overboard as there will be a price to pay! Be realistic and respect your body's need for food and rest! Arrange at least one Sunday lunch out this month, meeting someone with the initial S is starred.

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

By all means keep others up to date with information and facts but keep it to a 'need-to-know' basis. If you let yourself drift into gossip it will rebound on you and your reputation will take a knock that will be long-remembered! A mid-week punt may pay dividends!

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

You may be feeling a bit battered this month and perhaps it is time to look at those you can trust when the chips are down and those who are just fair-weather friends that you shouldn't be wasting your time and efforts on.

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

Loved ones might have been extra warm recently to make up for some earlier friction. You will be tempted to exploit the situation and who can blame you, but beware of milking it! Make the very most of this summer, it can be as intense as you want it to be. The letters M & P will be linked to good fortune.

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

You may have been getting excited about a project or plans lately but practical is not your strongest trait Sagittarius, is it? You really need to get help with this area if the idea has any chance of getting airborne. Don't let your enthusiasm blind you to practicalities!

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

Stop Capricorn! Take a break, have that coffee, slogging on will only blunt your creative edge. A situation that has stalled will require some innovative thinking on your part and only when you are at peace will you be able to get your creative juices flowing.

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

You need to listen to a loved one and don't assume they are against you. You may need to slow down a bit in order to take a closer, more analytical look. Listen to the opinions of others who care about you. The numbers in the birth date of a loved one may be linked to good fortune

★ PISCES: The Fish (20 Feb - 20 Mar)

Your romantic side can sometimes leave you vulnerable to deception as you attempt to share the good fortune that others have bestowed upon you. Share if you must but be discriminating. Remember some people just can't be helped! Take any important decisions before the weekend.

★ ARIES: The Ram (21 Mar - 20 April)

Don't let your confidence be dented by a lack of funds; you are worth more than your spending power! Take stock of all your strengths and talent and you will see just how great you really are! A decision taken early in the week rather than later will be propitious.

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

Lucky day: Friday

Your star has been shining for a while now but the light is waning. Maybe it is time to ease off and learn to work co-operatively. The upside is that you won't be the one getting all the blame! A flutter on Friday may pay off.

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

Mercury is approaching apogee and, as your ruling planet, you will find this an excellent time for communication. Seek out inspiring conversations and share your ideas. A possibly life-changing opportunity is starred in one of these chats. A midweek decision will prove to your advantage.

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