



Roger Wheeler

## Let's go roaming around...

So spring is actually here and summer is on its way, we have been expecting it for weeks, it was probably delivered by Royal Mail so the delay is unsurprising. Of course we have a drought, which probably means that it will rain constantly throughout July and August and of course Brighton's roads are being dug up in time for the tourist season. Was it ever thus?

By now most people who can afford it have made their holiday plans, but in case you are still planning a trip it might be useful to remember some suggestions that can save money. When booking holidays and flights you run the risk of being fleeced by experts. Always compare the bottom line of any flight, particularly with a budget airline, which in itself can be a misnomer, as quite often a major carrier can in fact be cheaper. When you add the extras companies like Ryanair charge, you will find that it can be cheaper to fly with BA who will include luggage at no extra cost, will not charge for using credit or debit cards, allow you to actually check in at the airport and will not use premium rate telephone lines. The Government has told airlines to stop making extra charges for using debit or credit cards and they have; now they just add an 'admin' fee of between £9 and £12. Never use one of the 090 or 0841 numbers which can cost up to £1.00 a minute, they use these numbers to get extra revenue. Look at their 'when calling from abroad' numbers and just add a 0 you will then have a standard rate number. Or simply use my favourite 'www.saynoto0840' website, you will find a cheaper or even free number.

We have some of the most expensive train and bus fares in the world but you've got to get to the airport, somehow.

Shop around. Southern Trains do offer 'Advance fares' which are quite reasonable. National Express having abolished their over 60s discount now offer a Senior Coachcard and for an annual fee £10.00 you can get a third off all fares. Of course never drive to any airport and leave the car, it's cheaper to take a taxi, rates for two weeks long stay parking can go from £150 to £250. When you actually have arrived in the departure area - I hesitate to use the word lounge, they certainly aren't like any lounge I have ever seen - beware of the shops. Before you leave home, a simple check of high street prices will quickly show you whether the tax free prices are quite as wonderful as they claim to be. It's well known that at Gatwick, Boots, WH Smith and World Duty Free prices are no cheaper than Western Road, Brighton. Of course you will never open a hotel mini bar will you? And never use a hotel Wi-Fi which can cost up to £20 per day when you will find a local coffee shop offering it for nothing.

There are many other ways of avoiding being ripped off, I have listed more on my website [www.theroamingpen.co.uk](http://www.theroamingpen.co.uk) and just click on the 'Local Travel' and the 'Correspondent' links. For a really cheap 'treat' try Brighton & Hove Buses M25 Flight of Fancy, for just £15.00 you can take a trip right round the M25, I can't think why you should, but their trips on 9th May and 11th October are selling out fast! We're off to help the economies of Greece, Ireland, Spain and Holland over the next few months, although the latter doesn't need much help from us.

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Joan Bygrave

## National Spiritualist Church- News

As I write this, I'm sitting on a cliff top overlooking South Bay at Scarborough, North Yorkshire. 'Don't go there in March' kind friends cautioned, 'it'll be cold, blustery, bitter winds blowing from the North Sea'. What do we have? Temperatures more akin to mid-summer and I wish I'd packed sunscreen rather than winter woollies.

Holidays give us time for reflection and observation and as in all situations in life, can bring out the best and the worst in us. As we set off from the south coast, there was a general air of bonhomie in the coach, consideration and kindness towards those who needed a helping hand, many aspects of the human spirit that make us feel good about ourselves and others. What a difference a few hours travelling made! We were making good progress on the A1 when our coach slowed to a halt and went nowhere for the next three and a half hours because a man was threatening to jump off a bridge spanning the carriageway.

Initially there was a grudging acceptance of the circumstances and much sympathy for the poor man whose mental state had led him to this situation. After 30 minutes a degree of irritation began to set in and after an hour or so the milk of human kindness rapidly ebbed away and anger was directed at the police, emergency services and the individual who was causing so much inconvenience to everyone. Fortunately, he was persuaded to accept help eventually and we all continued on our respective journeys, some spurred on by indignation and increased blood pressure. →



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