

one80 community london/brighton

The city – but not as we know it.

Unlike London, where new projects such as the Millennium Dome and the London Eye seem to happen with consummate ease, Brighton is caught up in red tape and objections. Roger Wheeler ponders what might have been and what may be.

A VISITOR RETURNING TO Brighton after a few years drops into the new Visitor Information Centre at Brighton Station to enquire about any new major attractions. The helpful staff advise him to go and marvel at the restored West Pier and then he should go up the i360, to admire the amazing view. Next along to Hove to see the wonderful Frank Gehry Towers that replaced the old seedy King Alfred Centre. On the way he will pass the new bandstand, an excellent job, recreating one of the city's finest attractions.

Then hopping onto the seafront monorail which will whizz him along to the fantastic Marina, passing the new International ice rink which they say seats 5,000. How did they manage to get that building into that site, he will wonder. It's on the derelict site of the lovely Art Deco Black Rock swimming pool, knocked down in the name of progress about 40 years ago.

It's at the Marina where he will see the real transformation, recalling the very tatty down-at-heel entrance with those dirty graffiti'd tunnels, that awful multi-story car park and the dreadful ASDA, all long gone. The redesign of the harbour is a huge success with the two new bridges linking the entire site to the main promenade and the new tower blocks enhancing what was, let's face it, a pretty boring seascape.

Did he spot the new that very inventive use of the old Reading Room on the Kemp Town slopes, a tea room exactly where one was

needed. Why not a cocktail bar, he wonders. Of course the boys are still patrolling the area, making sure it's as gay as it ever was.

The newly restored Madeira lift, a really lovely Victorian treasure, is now back in fully working order.

Finally a visit to the amazing new Falmer Stadium, offering great sporting facilities to the entire city as well as a home for Brighton & Hove Albion Football club. That really showed vision.

The new look city centre is very successful - all that awful traffic now gone, the pedestrianised North Street and St James's Street buzzing with shops, cafes and bars, business is obviously brisk, following Birmingham's example. Our visitor is gay and needing a drink he drops into one of the new smart bars for a pint of real ale, noting that the Bulldog and the other old favourites are still there, still serving cold continental lagers.

Oh, have you spotted a flaw in all that? No I wasn't dreaming; everything mentioned has been planned and approved by the local authority and has been the subject of much public discussion but of course nothing has happened with any of these wonderful plans. Will it? Probably not.

It is a surprise the Royal Pavilion was ever built. It certainly wouldn't get either planning consent or even public approval today. We seem to live a world that resents change of any sort at all, so we leave so many hideous eyesores around our lovely home. It's some-

what like having a beautiful face that is covered in spots; you know how to get rid of them, but actually, being frightened of anything new, we learned to love them. So let's not change anything, as soon as there is any sort of plan to improve or enhance anywhere, there will immediately be a committee/pressure group against it. Frantic emails will be sent to everyone asking us to send petitions to No. 10. The Argus, our beloved tabloid, will jump on the bandwagon, and they love nothing more than stoking up outrage where none previously existed.

No one is suggesting wholesale re-development of Brighton - just let's get on with updating and improving. There are about ten different projects that have been suggested, discussed, examined, exhibitions mounted, meetings taken place and eventually approval gained and then nothing. Take a look at Birmingham, Liverpool, Paris or Barcelona, all major cities that have had the courage to take on the future, re-design, update and improve to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. What's wrong with us? Does anybody know and if they do, what is the answer? I certainly don't have one - I just despair.

The Victorian poet, Samuel Rogers, observed that "Brighton is still very gay and full of balls", that was in 1829; it hasn't changed much one hundred and eighty years later.

PS: Apologies, work has started on the bandstand and the football stadium and they promise work soon on the i360, I'm not holding my breath.

Brighton's proposed seafront i360, which is (apparently) already being constructed



Community helplines

BRIGHTON & HOVE

- **Access 4 All** LGBT disabled support group (01273) 721 211 www.access-4-all.org
- **Allsorts Youth Project** Tel: (01273) 721211 Email: info@allsortsyouth.org.uk www.allsortsyouth.org.uk
- **BLAGSS** Brighton Lesbian & Gay Sports Society.0845 65 BLAGS www.blagss.org
- **Brighton Bandits FC** (01273) 6222273 www.banditsfc.org
- **Brighton Bothways** Group for the bi-sexual, bi-curious and their friends www.brighton-bothways.org.uk
- **Brighton & Hove Disabled Dykes** (01273) 204050 Email: disabled-dykes@yahoo.co.uk
- **Brighton & Hove LGBT Switchboard** (01273) 204050 www.switchboard.org.uk/brighton
- **Brighton LGBT Meditation Group** 07789900568
- **Brighton Metropolitan Community Church (MCC)** Tel. (01273) 681101 www.brightonwavesmccbrampton.co.uk
- **Brighton Oursory Project** (01273) 206655 www.brightonoursory.co.uk
- **Brighton Women's Centre**

72 High St, Brighton. (01273) 698036.

- **CAB HIV Project** (01273) 327474 www.brightonhovecab.org.uk
- **Cheek To Cheek LGBT** dance classes (01273) 604834
- **Clare Project** (Transsexual/gender identity counselling 07776 232100 www.clareproject.org.uk)
- **Claude Nicol Centre** - NHS Sexual Health Clinic Royal Sussex County Hospital, Eastern Rd (01273) 664721
- **GAYSWAG - Gay Sussex Walking Group** 0870 7605476 www.gayswag.co.uk
- **GEMS** Group for mature gay men. Meets last Fri of the month at Dorset Gardens Methodist Church (01273) 884285
- **Lawson Unit** - HIV Clinic Royal Sussex County Hospital, Eastern Rd (01273) 664722
- **Lesbian & Gay Advocacy Project** Guidance with mental health problems (01273) 739847.
- **Lesbian and Gay AA** Meets every Sunday at 7.30pm Chapel Royal, North St, BN1 (01273) 203343.
- **LGBT Narcotics Anonymous Group** (NA) Meets every Friday from 6pm 61 Ship Street, BN1 (01273) 664604.
- **Mindout** Guidance for LGBT

with mental health problems. (01273) 739847 www.lgbmind.com

- **Pride in Brighton & Hove** For information or to volunteer call (01273) 775939 www.brightonpride.org
- **Rise (formerly The Women's Refuge Project)** domestic violence charity 01273 622822 www.rise.org.uk
- **Spectrum** LGBT community group (01273) 723123 www.spectrum-lgbt.org
- **The Sussex Beacon** - HIV care centre. (01273) 694222 www.sussexbeacon.org.uk
- **Terrence Higgins Trust (THT)** - sexual health/HIV charity. 61 Ship St, (01273) 764200 www.tht.org.uk
- **Trans Swimming** Trans swimming group every Monday 8.30pm Call 07867 741025 for venue details
- **UNISEX SEXUAL HEALTH PROMOTION** University sexual health & drug/alcohol awareness service (01273) 678 641 www.unisex.org.uk
- **Warren Brown Unit** Testing & treatment for STIs(01273) 461453.
- **Wilde Clinic** - Sexual Health Clinic for gay/bi men Weds: 6pm-9pm at the Lawson Unit. (01273) 664722 www.brightonsexualhealth.com

LONDON

- **Albert Kennedy Trust** Support for young homeless LGBT people (0207) 831 6562 www.akt.org.uk
- **Antidote** Drug and alcohol support (0207) 4372523 www.thehungerford.org/antidote.asp
- **Beau Belles** Under 25 LGBT social group (0208) 4961530 www.myspace.com/beaubelles
- **Cara Life** Spiritual support for those living with HIV (0207) 2436147 www.caralife.com
- **Courage** (GLB Christian organisation (01483) 301411 www.courage.org.uk)
- **Depression Alliance LGB Support Group** (0845) 1232320
- **Diversity Chamber Choir** Singing social www.diversitychoir.co.uk
- **Eve Club** Lesbian social (07890) 777464
- **Families Together London** Support for parents of LGBT kids (0208) 87442 www.familiestogetherlondon.com
- **4playsquash London** Sports group www.4playsquash.org
- **Freestyle Youth** Under 25 group (0207) 0648383 www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk
- **Galop** Community safety (0207) 7042040 www.galop.org.uk
- **Gay Asia Meets** Group for gay/bisexual Asian and Oriental men www.gayasiameets.page.it
- **Gaywise** LGBT arts group www.wisethoughts.org
- **Grace's Cricket Club** www.gracescricket.org.uk
- **Irons Golf Society** Gay golf group (07801) 290193 www.ironsgolf.org.uk
- **Kings Cross Steelers RFC** Gay rugby team (07767) 232909 www.kxsrfc.com
- **Lesbian and Gay Conservation Volunteers** Environment group (0207) 2784294
- **LGBT Consortium Parenting Group** Support for parents of LGBT kids (0207) 0648383 www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk
- **London Bi Women's Group** www.lbiwomen.bi.org
- **London Friend** Counselling/bereavement service (0207) 78373337 www.londonfriend.org.uk
- **London Frontrunners** Gay and lesbian running group 07092 346340 www.londonfrontrunners.org
- **London Gay Men's Chorus** (0845) 8382059 www.lgmc.org.uk
- **London Gay Symphony Orchestra** 07963 853099 www.lgso.org.uk
- **London Lesbian and Gay**

Switchboard (0207) 8377324 www.ligs.org.uk

- **London Raiders Softball Club** Mixed gay and lesbian softball club www.londonraiders.com
- **London Transsexual Information Support & Social Group** (0208) 3557413 email londoninfo@ntlworld.com
- **Menzlink** Gay male social group (0208) 5093898
- **Metro Centre** LGBT service provider (0208) 3055000 www.metrocentreonline.org
- **Mosaic Youth Group** Under 19 group 07931 336668 www.mosaicyouth.org.uk
- **Octopus** Gay social group (0208) 2702006 www.octopus-group.org.uk
- **PACE** Counselling and advocacy (0207) 3595767 www.pacehealth.org.uk
- **Pink Therapy** LGBT therapy organisation (0207) 4340367 www.pinktherapy.org.uk
- **Romans AFC** Football club www.londonromans.com
- **Soho Masses** LGBT Catholics. (0208) 9860807
- **Stonewall Housing** Housing advice for the LGBT community (0207) 3595767 www.stonewallhousing.org
- **Thames Reach Housing Association** (0208) 4631177 www.thamesreach.org.uk

one80community listings

Free to non-profit organisations that offer help, advice or a service to the LGBT community. If you would like to add your listings to this page please send to info@one80news.com one week prior to publication date.