

RETROGRADE RETRO RETAILERS

All the pretty young things at Brighton vintage outlet Beyond Retro have certainly gone beyond the pale by refusing to withdraw imported fur jackets.

Sussex Action for Animals visited the shop on Vine Street in the North Laine and found not just 'vintage' fur but also some brand new white rabbit fur jackets bearing labels saying 'made in China'.

When confronted, shop staff trotted out some vague definitions of 'vintage' and said the rabbit jackets were second-hand. All fur is second-hand, mate.

Pretty lame when their 'vintage fur' will have involved a slow tortuous death, probably involving the animal languishing in a trap for hours. Fur garments from China mean a rabbit, dog or cat being skinned alive.

Weekly demos continue 12pm each Sunday outside the shop. After the first demo the furs were removed but apparently the London Manager came down and ordered them put back.

For more info look up Sussex Action for Animals on Facebook.

BRING ON THE SABS

South Downs Hunt Sabs are getting ready for another season in the field. The need to confront our local blood junkies is more urgent than ever now that the old Etonian foxhunter David Cameron is in at number 10.

Before the election Cameron was reassuring his pals in the Countryside Alliance that the ban on fox-hunting was gonna be repealed. In reality hunts, ably assisted round our way by Sussex police, were carrying on their cruel business unhindered.

Local activists have been carrying on the struggle since the ineffectual ban came in in 2005, facing off against the Old Surrey and Burstow, Southdown and Eridge and Crawley and Horsham hunts. An attempt by the Crawley and Horsham hunt to obtain an injunction to prevent monitors from filming their activities met with ignominious defeat in the courts last year.

Local group, South Downs Hunt Sabs are holding an open meeting at the Cowley Club on Tuesday 11th August, 7.30pm. They'll be screening a newly released film, 'A Minority Pastime'. Check out the trailer on Youtube.

WATCH YER LANGUAGE

Not content with persecuting downtrodden foreigners, the UK Border Agency (UKBA) is now aiming its jackboot at English language schools.

UKBA officers recently descended unannounced on Brighton's Regency College, for what they described as an "interview" and what the principal of the school described as a "criminal investigation".

Border agents spent two hours grilling the principal, while others interrogated several of the school's students who were on work placement. The visits to the students took place without the school's prior knowledge and were conducted in an "unprofessional" manner - in some cases the wrong people were questioned, in others, questions were asked about the wrong company.

Nevertheless, the UKBA-stards reckoned they could pin people-smuggling on 'em - so they immediately suspended the school from the list of trusted visa-sponsors. The school wasn't given any chance to respond, despite repeated requests for feedback. This left them unable to grant visas to non-EU students, resulting in tens of thousands of pounds of refunds and a cash flow crisis that would have seen the school close within weeks.

With 30 jobs hanging in the balance the school challenged the decision in court and spent several weeks in the legal mangle. The decision was ruled illegitimate after a hearing in which an irate judge told the UKBA representatives that they "might have the power to suspend schools, but that doesn't give them the right".

Over 100 schools have been suspended from the sponsor-list recently, but only six of these have remained suspended after legal challenges. It seems the millions brought in by students pales in comparison to the threat posed to our national security by people learning the lingo.

WILL GARDENERS BE UPROOTED?



By the time you read this, Lewes Road Community Garden could be boarded up, patrolled by security and ready for another five years of dereliction. But as *RM* goes to press, it's still here - two court cases, and two eviction attempts later. It's looking slightly bedraggled, but what wouldn't be after this 15 month rollercoaster.

The latest is that the developers' court papers were invalid as they had the wrong planning deed numbers on them. Doh! The garden's legal support have informed the High Court and it looks like further eviction attempts could be stalled as a result.

The last eviction attempt on July 22 saw bailiffs barge their way into the garden office of the former Esso garage and issue bemused occupiers with a High Court writ of possession (note Mr Bailiff man - not an eviction order). They set about clearing the office but hadn't reckoned on the quick response time of locals. Within hours, a gang of gardeners were at the front gate (as they did for the first blockade on July 2) defying the bulldozer and grabber which were pulled up on one of the most polluting roads into Brighton.

The five bailiffs, eight cops and six subbies failed to make headway - due to the media being on the scene and families with kids blocking the gate. Thankfully we saw none of the heavy-handed tactics that greeted guerilla gardeners on an out-of-the-way site in Bristol earlier this year.

By half eleven the 'dozer was put back on the lorry and the workers - contracted to Belfast-based developers Alburn Minos Developments (acting on behalf of Tesco) and their sidekicks Gilbert-Ash and Taurean Management - made their way home.

Out of the frying pan, however: that night a fire broke in the occupied office thanks to an upended candle. Here's how The Argus reported it:

1) "The alarm was only raised after Tesco worker Paul Arnold saw plumes of smoke." Wrong. A builder called Lee came into the garden and told people he could see smoke.

2) "One of the protesters who was asleep in the building managed to crawl out through another exit as fire fighters ...smashed their way through a first floor window." Wrong. There's only one exit which both men escaped from. The fire-fighters entered through the same door, hence smashing no first floor window.

3) "Other campaigners were still asleep in the community garden and were unaware of the danger the victim was in." Wrong. It was their shouting and kicking in of the door which woke them up and saved both their lives.

RM is happy to offer any Argus journalist a day's work experience - on the house.

Meanwhile we'll offer our support to a green investment plan where a cafe and garden could co-exist; the whole issue of land covenants which prohibits alcohol sales on the land; and a review of Brighton Council's 'non-consultation' process.

Cuba Festival at the garden this Sunday (Aug 8) 2-7pm.

What Is Rough Music?

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PRIDE! HUH, WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?



While Brighton is getting ready for another city-wide Pride party, Sussex police are gearing themselves up for yet another clampdown.

A top *RM* tip for Sussex Plod in these cash-strapped times: maybe it's time for a cutback on the clampdowns, boys. The force is now averaging 2.6 a week, which is considerably higher than the national average. Targets of clampdowns so far this year include: alcohol, alcohol-induced violence, rogue cyclists, untaxed vehicles, loan sharks, legal drugs, rogue traders and finally... bad behaviour in general.

The latest clampdown threatened by Chief Inspector Laurence Taylor is on any illicit partying after Pride. According to paper of record the Argus (see Wankers Corner, *RM*#22) Laughin' boy Lawrence is simply not going to tolerate any fun after midnight on Pride weekend. He said officers will stop any unlawful outdoor events, including those on the beach, taking place between Friday August 6 and Sunday August 8. After all, it's not like anyone comes to Brighton for a party is it?

Now *RM* holds no brief for those who get their jollies podium dancing to happy-house (we're more yer face-down in the K-hole chewing the pavement in time to ear-bleeding techno types) but given that Sussex Police are no doubt gonna be shedding tears about budgetary constraints for the next few years isn't it about time they just lightened up?

In fact, why not spend the clampdown cash on a party for the coppers? 'Police Pride' has a nice ring to it - and they have their fair share of shame to shake off. Or they could just fuck off and leave us to it.

Brighton Pride has had an interesting year: financial trouble and an ongoing identity crisis over it's community spirit that may, or may not be, all that sincere. Besides the scandal-friendly titbits, such as the last minute changes and the reallocation of the entire bar contract, there might be a bigger bone to pick with Pride. What's it really for?

Brighton Pride is keen to point out that it's working hard to get back to it's community roots, to "put the heart back" into Pride. How did the heart of an event like this get lost?

Pride isn't a community event: the Wild Fruit Dance Tent costs £25k, whilst less than £3k goes to local community groups. At the end of 2009, Pride voiced concern over having no political women's space and no space for LGBT people of colour. It also said that any changes on this front were to be postponed until it could consult with the community.

This raises the question of exactly how much community consultation went into securing these massive corporate contracts that Pride can hardly afford?

Some seem to think that homophobia is history and that Pride is just an excuse for a big party. Utter bollocks. Homophobic attacks are still happening even in lovely liberal Brighton, while transphobia is often still considered normal.

And it's not even as though Pride is a community party; it's a massive corporatised event and a marketing fest for bars and clubs. And there's the rub. An LGBT commercial entity making thousands selling booze is still just a commercial entity.

Brighton Pride is as guilty as anyone of feeding the creation of an entertainment-based LGBT monoculture - an almost wholly commercialised space. Is Pride's biggest achievement the right for gay people to be ripped off too?

The unifying factor at Brighton Pride is no longer an LGBT identity (or support for the LGBT community from others), it's about getting wrecked.

What about the LGBT people who want to campaign, or are too young to drink, or who just want to stay sober? What about those, like this writer, who feel alienated and isolated by the corporate bullshit and are left wondering where the radicalism went?

**Pride is getting twitchy about what is being written about it, and has published an informative PDF (www.brightonpride.org) to set the record straight. So, in the interests of looking at Pride as it sees itself (and avoiding a libel case we can't afford) we've got it all from the horse's mouth. Like our ketamine.*

COPYLEFT - ROUGHIN' IT UP ON THE STREETS OF BRIGHTON

BYPASS BYPASSED

Brighton's closest planned road scheme, the £100m Bexhill Link Road (Hastings Bypass by any other name) has been shelved until at least 2011.

In March (RM #23) it looked likely the road would get the go-ahead and we'd be seeing groundworks by the end of the year. So, what's changed?

Seems like the good old bankers came to the rescue - by backing out. Since we pay the price for their profligacy, anything that can be cut will be. So the beautiful Combe Haven Valley and wetlands could be saved without a bender or brew in sight.

In fact, the road would've had a major effect on two Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Combe Haven and Marline Valley - resulting in habitat destruction, loss of ancient woodland; and the wiping out of wetland birds and protected species. All this for an average car journey saving of about two minutes.

Amber Rudd, new MP for Hastings & Rye, is still pushing for the scheme but Hastings Alliance - a rag-tag group of rambles - are countering her every move. The next fixture in the furore falls on Oct 20, when Autumn's spending decisions are announced.

The arguments against the road are pretty straightforward: come up with some workplace travel plans (none currently operate in the two towns); finish off the Bexhill-Hastings cycleway; build a new station at Glynde Gap; and have real-time bus information.

MIGRANT ACTION

Brighton Calais Migrant Solidarity is looking to get more people out to France this summer and autumn to help out migrants/refugees/asylum seekers on the ground facing daily humiliation from the French authorities.

Building on summer awareness marches through Brighton it's reckoned there may be some takers. On one march with RM in attendance thirty or so protesters moved off Churchill Square to the UK Border Agency office in Frederick House under the banner 'Stop the repression of migrants'.

Leaflets explaining the situation in Calais and debunking common myths about migration were handed out to strains of 'No borders, No nations, Stop deportations' while an hour long occupation of the office forecourt took place.

Brighton CMS meets every week and is always keen for new people and new ideas. Email brightoncms@hotmail.com.

THROWING A WOBBLY

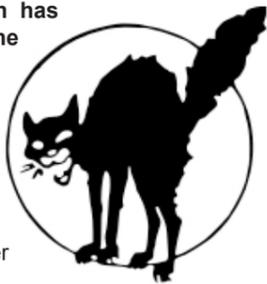
A new branch of the IWW union has just been chartered, establishing the 'Wobblies' in Brighton.

Even though the union has the title Industrial Workers of the World, its members include everyone from teachers to bartenders. In fact anyone is welcome to join regardless of race, nationality, gender or sexual orientation - unless you have the power to hire or fire, or work for the Old Bill.

One Brighton Wobbly told RM, "We're a grassroots, volunteer-driven union, controlled by our members, with no union bosses or bureaucrats. We believe workers have a greater voice if everyone in the same industry organises together. For example teachers, cleaners and secretaries who work in a school should all rally together as education workers."

The IWW has grown in the UK in recent years, winning disputes for its members all over the place. Along with the University and College Union, the IWW campaigned to defend Chrighton university campus in Scotland from closure in 2008, winning a £5m victory.

A Sussex branch IWW member recently gave a talk on contractual rights to migrants organised by the charity Brighton Voices in Exile, and more are planned. Visit www.iww.org.uk or email sussexiww@riseup.net.



MERRY SMEARS

Mary Mears, conservative leader of our beloved council, has weighed in on the great Smash EDO debate.

Contrary-Mary spent a record total of zero days at the recent trial of the activists accused of conspiring to cause criminal damage at the EDO ITT weapons factory. Of course, such dedication to the cause only makes her insights that much more valuable.

Merry Smears, in her fascinating blog, used the headline "EDO verdict turns justice on it's head" to sound off about a trial she wasn't at, saying: "I must admit to being completely astonished at the 'not guilty' verdict in the trial of the 'Smash EDO' activists who broke into and caused £200,000 worth of criminal damage to the EDO MBM HQ in Moulsecomb.

"These so-called 'decommissioners' were adjudged [sic] to have acted with "lawful excuse" to prevent further alleged war crimes being committed by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza.

"The idea that you can now legally and justifiably cause criminal damage to a company/organisation who are acting completely within the law (and incidentally employing significant numbers of local people) just because you don't agree with what they do, is extremely worrying and sets a dangerous precedent."

Well, possibly it would Mary, but of course that isn't what happened at all. Let's go over it again shall we? (For those at the back who weren't paying attention.) After three and a half weeks of evidence a JURY randomly selected from Sussex reached a verdict of 'not guilty'. In all cases the verdict was unanimous.

Firstly, jury decisions don't set precedents - only judge's decisions do that. Anyone else brave enough to face up to EDO's factory and take the place out with hammers would also have to submit to trial by jury.

Secondly, the verdict shows that the jury who sat through a five day cross-examination of EDO's MD, Paul Hills, must have thought that the actions of the defendants were 'to prevent a greater crime'. That hardly suggests that EDO's business is "completely within the law".

We'll leave the last words to Ewa Jasciewicz, who was actually in Gaza at the time it was being bombarded in Dec-Jan 2009.

"I told many people in Gaza about the people's strike on EDO MBM. I saw an expression come over their faces that I hadn't encountered before when talking about international solidarity.

"It was a kind of respect, a sense of surprised pride at a tiny move towards a levelling between the blood sacrifices and living hell of so many here, and sacrifices made by people in comparative comfort zones on the other side of the world - for them."

BENEFITS BUGGERED

Housing benefit is to be cut 'n' capped across the country in another case of the poor coughing up to cover the crisis caused by the capitalists. Cunts.

Using the proposed Government figures, the allowance for a one-bedroom flat in Brighton would go down to £138.08 per week, or £598.35 per month (it is currently £149.59 per week, or £648 per month). Whatsmore, the new allowances will no longer increase with rent prices - so in a few years no allowances will match the actual rents!

So what about all the private landlords who've turned Brighton into a buy-to-let 'paradise' by the sea? Are they gonna lose out, or will the tenants be expected to dig deep to make up the difference? You know it.

There are also plans afoot to attack those on Jobseekers Allowance for longer than a year by cutting their housing benefit by up to 10%. There'll be no need to prove whether a claimant is on the scam or not hunting hard enough. People who are unemployed will be guilty - simply - of being unemployed. RM thinks that its the bankers, who created this mess in the first place, who should be getting their benefits cut - not those pushed out of employment by the recession.

Rebel against the government's budget: Brighton Benefits Campaign meets every Thursdays at the Duke of Wellington pub, Upper Gloucester Road, near Brighton Station, at 6.00pm.

CAN THEY CUT IT? YES THEY CAN!

With council workers preparing for an autumn of angst followed by yer obligatory winter of discontent - here's your RM guide as to where the axe will fall:

Sussex uni bosses have forced through redundancies of over 100 lecturers and support staff, with severe impact on courses and workloads despite student and staff fightbacks.

Workers have been pressured into "voluntary" redundancy to avoid a majority of compulsory losses. In June, individuals were told they'd get compulsory redundancy but then given the option of a "voluntary" settlement - meaning better redundancy pay, but no option of appeal. Clever bastards!

Meanwhile rank and file union members have argued all along that the starting point of the main academic and support staff unions was wrong, and they should have been arguing for no cuts at all rather than compulsory/voluntary bollox.

None of the three campus unions (UCU, Unite and Unison) had rejected management's line that savings were necessary - though there's enough money for multi-million pound building projects, and the Vice Chancellor, Professor Michael Farthing's self-sanctioned 43% pay rise to £227k.

Overall Brighton council say the £3.55m cuts from this year's budget will equate to 41 full time posts but unions reckon this'll be more likely over 100 jobs and they have formed Brighton Stop the Cuts Coalition with a Sept launch.

Meanwhile the council is insistent on shooting itself in the foot over Community Base in Queen's Road which has office space for 25 community/voluntary groups. Ignoring the work they do, which actually takes the pressure off council services, officials want to start levying full business rates while refusing to allow advertising on the side of the building which provides a vital £18,500 per year.

With 1 in every 4 council jobs at risk RM points workers in Brighton to Cityclean workers, who last year defeated cuts, when their strike action prevented massive pay-cuts. One out, all out!

TITNORE-RAT-A-TAT-TAT-DOWN

What next following the unexpected victory for Camp Titnore? Despite seeing off developers who wanted to build over ancient Worthing woodlands the fate of the land is still not certain.

The four year battle (camp set up in May 2006) was won after Worthing planning councillors unanimously threw out the £3bn scheme in the Spring having taken on board flood risks and the fact that Worthing has more than enough brownfield sites.

Bryant Homes, Persimmon Homes and Heron Group are not going to appeal and say that any revised application will avoid the woods. Long-time Titnore campaigners are warily raising a jar with one eye still firmly on the prize.

As such campers plan to stay put 24/7 to keep an eye on the nearby spinney, as this is likely to be under threat from smaller scale, revised plans. However, in the meantime hardy soap-dodgers are taking down ground structures and tree houses on site near the front field (the Earl of Somerset who owns it must be choking on his gold-plated cornflakes after losing a cool £3-4m on land sales). Tough shit Fitzroy and master Clem, better luck next time.

In a further twist, Worthing campaigners are now looking into the possibility of having more included as part of the National Park. Once the site is returned to its natural state (how long does a Special Brew can take to decompose?), a consultant will look at the land and report to the new National Park authorities.

To help with the tat down get yerself down to the site - only a 20-min walk from Goring Station. For more info and directions: www.protectourwoodland.co.uk

WANKERS CORNER

A regular column featuring our favourite Brightonians

This time round we give a long overdue Wanker award to Paul Hills, MD of our favourite bomb builders, EDO ITT.

Some might say Paul should have been higher up the list, what with his hard-man posturing outside the factory and his collection of boy-toy posh cars hinting at a mid-life crisis larger than most. But RM decided to hold back the prize until he'd had a chance to make a complete plum of himself in court. An opportunity he seized, like the wanker he is, with both hands.

During the trial of six nutters who smashed up his factory, Paul used his five days on the stand to amuse the jury by pretending that EDO's primary business was the manufacture of in-flight entertainment equipment.

This was followed by a comedy masterclass in how not to give evidence as he desperately tried to wriggle off the war crimes hook - looking the whole time like a sweating second hand car salesman. In the end he admitted that anyone might form a reasonable belief that his factory does indeed supply components that could be used for war crimes.

Not content with getting rich off of the aerial bombardment of civilians, Paul's developed a little sideline in false accusations. During the trial he singled out one regular attendee of the EDO demos and tried to get him fitted up for witness intimidation. However, having got the guy nicked Paul lost his bottle and didn't turn up to give evidence... What a wanker!



"I could 'ave you nicked, I could."

NOT SO WILD PARK?

Brighton Council intends to clear three quarters of Wild Park and the surrounding area known as the '39 Acres'.

They claim they want to restore it to grassland chalk. They've already cleared a section of the park, fenced it and filled it with sheep. They intend to do the same to the rest of the park, leaving only a small area where dogs will be able to be let off the leash.

There's been little consultation about all this. Apparently public notices were only put in the Pavilion shop and cafes on London Rd. Meanwhile there are 600 sheep involved (not council officers), for which council taxpayers pay £2 a week to rent from the farmer for 21 weeks of the year. This works out at £31,200 a year. It also costs £100 each time the sheep are moved.

The fence that has already been erected cost £25,000. It crosses over well established footpaths in the park and restricts people's enjoyment of the area. The fence was cut 2 weeks ago and that apparently will cost £2,300 to repair.

At a recent closed meeting at the Council a petition was handed in by Patcham residents where exactly the same thing was happening in their local wooded area. A Freedom of Information request regarding aspects of the project has so far been blocked, as it would take too long to provide information.

An objection by protesters has been lodged on the grounds that no request was made for information going back to 1993, as the council has stated.

Wild Park and 39 Acres, on the edge of 3 council estates, was left to the people of Brighton in 1925. It is used by walkers, dog walkers and mountain bikers who have built an impressive course in the woods, destined for the chop!

Here at RM we're a bit ambivalent about the park's fate. We're never pleased to see woodland go, but it could be worse. After all, chalky grassland beats another bloody Tesco.

ROUGH MUSIC IS ONLINE: www.roughmusic.org.uk