

Theatre of dreams in the playground

By JULIETTE BOWERS - courtesy of Brighton and Hove Leader



Pupils from Elm Grove Primary School performing in their new amphitheatre

Youngsters at Elm Grove Primary School in Brighton have celebrated the opening of a new amphitheatre in their school grounds. Music by the school samba band and Year 6 choir sounded out around the outdoor arena, which can hold up to 60 people.

The opening marked the culmination of a series of fundraising events in which the school had to match a £20,000 grant from the city council. Among many supporters was Brighton-based actress Cate Blanchett. She donated the watch she wore during the shooting of her latest movie, after hearing

about the fundraising appeal. The school sold the watch on auction website eBay for £1,021. The amphitheatre, believed to be the only one at a Brighton and Hove school, has been built in the entrance to the old Kemp Town railway tunnel. The tunnel was blocked up when the line closed many years ago and an area in front

forms the school playground. Landscape architect Fiona Atkinson was commissioned to design the amphitheatre, building work was carried out by Sussex contractor Penfolds and another Brighton company, Living Space Arts, worked with the children to design and create the mosaic. The design incorporates two semicircular tiers of seating behind a circle of stone with a mosaic in the centre. Behind the seating area the mound of soil has been reshaped and planted. Headteacher John Lynch said: "The acoustics are



Head:
John Lynch

fantastic. You can stand in the middle and your voice can be heard around the whole area.

The children are very imaginative in their play there." The amphitheatre is already an invaluable source of inspiration and has been used for rehearsals of the school's production of Saturday Night Fever.

Fast seafront buses with travel network connections

A Bid to fund a major rapid transport scheme for Brighton & Hove has been submitted to the Department for Transport.

The bid, worth £19.5 million, would finance initial start-up and operating costs for a completely new, limited-stop public transport. The service would offer a fast, reliable service along the seafront, connecting with other transport interchanges and popular destinations in the city.

The new system would link the city centre to Brighton Marina in the East and the King Alfred in the West, as well as a possible Park & Ride site in the North. One proposed route provides a direct service to American Express and the Royal Sussex County Hospital.

The bid has been developed to utilise hybrid electric vehicles. These would be both highly fuel efficient and have low emissions.

If the bid is successful, the funding would provide half of the capital costs, the rest would be borrowed by the council. A further £4 million is being applied for to finance a potential Park & Ride site.

Councillor Mitchell said: "Any future Park & Ride site could be linked into the system to provide swift journeys into the city centre for those visiting or travelling to work from outlying areas.



Market Trends

David Maslen
Maslen Estate Agents

The property market has been a year of two halves. The first half saw a huge stock of properties for sale, decreasing property prices, very cautious buyers and the media reporting we were heading for a property crash - which did not happen. The second half saw a return of buyer confidence with many more sales being agreed - much less for sale, and property prices stabilising.

However some agents and sellers continue to overprice. These properties will, and have remained for sale for many months, often selling in the end for much less than their true value because they have become stale. Over the coming 6 months I believe that property prices will remain stable and there will be a reasonable amount of buyers and sellers alike. As always, sensible pricing is the way forward to ensure that you maximise the interest in your property and buyers want to come and view.

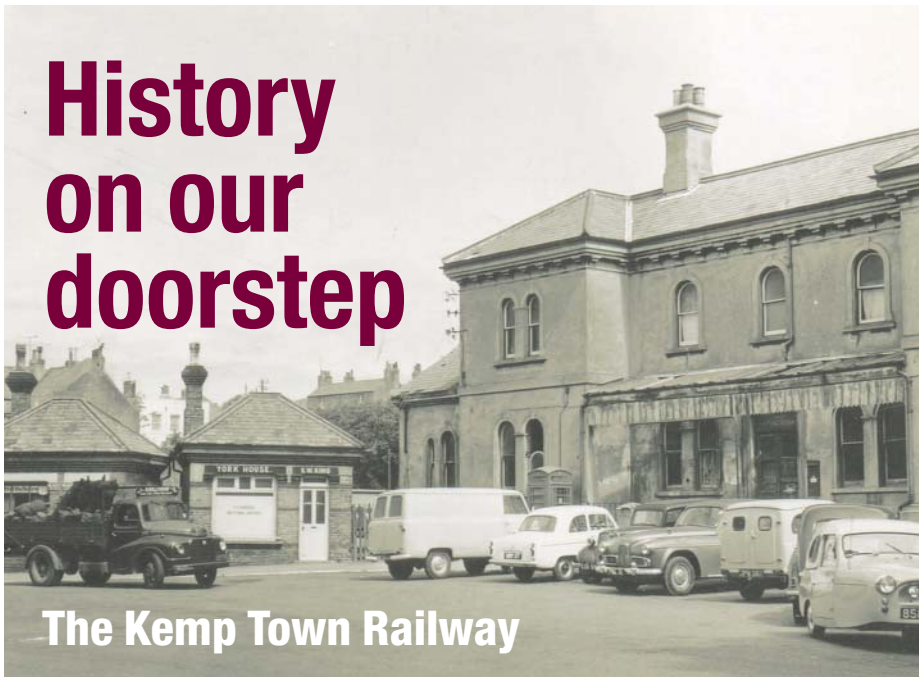
What's on!

Some local events scheduled during the next few months

15 Oct	Fairtrade Fair 11am-5pm - Friend's Meeting House
16 Oct	Art Deco Fair 10am - £2.50 - Hove Centre
05 Nov / 08 Jan	Paula Rego: A retrospective exhibition - Brighton Museum
06 Nov	RAC Veteran car run Vintage Car Rally - Madeira Drive
06 Nov	Toy Collectors Fair Brighton Racecourse
20 Nov	10K Road Race - Madeira Drive
21 Dec	Burning of the Clocks - Brighton

Please note: It is advisable to check dates, times and venue before travelling as each event is planned well in advance.

History on our doorstep



One of the most ridiculous railway lines ever built served Kemp Town for more than a century. It ran off what is now the East Coastway line near Lewes Road and went on an impressive viaduct before diving into a tunnel more than half a mile long. Hugely expensive to build, it never realised the hopes of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway Company. One reason was that the length of the railway from Brighton to Kemp Town station was 2.3 miles, more than double the distance by road. But there was a reason for all this madness.

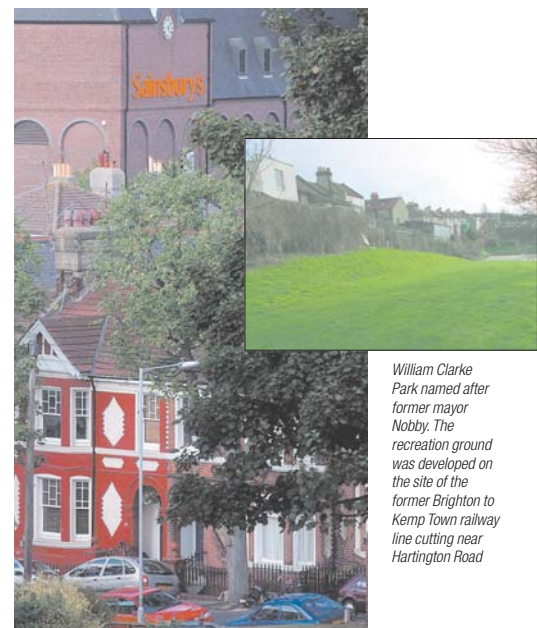
The line was built mainly to thwart a possible rival incursion into Brighton. The other company also wanted a line into Kemp Town and even planned a rival to Brighton station opposite the Royal Pavilion. Later there were plans to extend the railway from Kemp Town to Newhaven, meeting up with the existing line, but they came to nothing. It took five years to build the Kemp Town line and it finally opened in 1869. Eventually two stations were built along the route at Lewes Road and Hartington Road. At one time more than 80,000 passengers a year used the line but this was not a huge figure for an urban railway and it closed to passengers in 1932 thanks to competition from buses. Kemp Town station, an imposing construction at the end of the tunnel, was in Coalbrook Road. It had an extensive goods yard and the idea was to take much of the freight traffic from Brighton. This did not happen but the railway continued in use for many years carrying coal and



Former Brighton mayor and railway guard W. J. "Nobby" Clarke

other traffic. During the Second World War it was used as an air raid shelter. Eventually British Rail decided to close the little line and the goods traffic was transferred to Hove in 1971. But before it closed, in June of that year, people were invited to travel on the railway for the last time and they came in their thousands. Later an industrial estate was built on the station site and it is still there today. The tunnel was used for storage and also housed a mushroom farm.

Another industrial estate was built at the Lewes Road end. The cutting near Hartington Road was filled in and turned into a recreation ground called William Clarke Park. This was in honour of a former Labour mayor of Brighton and long-term election agent universally known not as William but Nobby Clarke. Nobby was a lifelong railwayman and a guard on some trains on the line. The bridge over Hartington Road was demolished in 1973 without ceremony but conservationists objected to plans for pulling down the Lewes Road viaduct even though it was redundant. They liked the architecture, a view not held by everyone, and they managed to get it listed which led to a long delay before its eventual demolition in 1976. A few echoes of The most pointless railway in Brighton remain. Sainsbury's store, built nearby, has an archway motif on the side while a home for the elderly in Hartington Road was called Old Viaduct Court. It is just possible to see the southern entrance



William Clarke Park named after former mayor Nobby. The recreation ground was developed on the site of the former Brighton to Kemp Town railway line cutting near Hartington Road

Reminders of the former Kemp Town railway remain. Sainsbury's store, built on the Vogue Gyrotory and viewed from William Clarke Park, has an archway motif on the side. Picture: Susannah Binney

of the tunnel at the back of the industrial estate in Kemp Town. Had a railway ever been built directly from Brighton to Kemp Town, it might have been a commercial success but the look of a line passing by the Pavilion and crossing the Valley Gardens would probably have been too high a price to pay for it.



Library packed with gadgets is up for award

Brighton's landmark Jubilee Library has been nominated for a Downing Street accolade. The library, which opened in March, is one of 15 finalists in line for the Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award. Now in its fifth year, the annual architecture award recognises excellence in design quality and funding methods of public building schemes. The library, built by the London architects The Mill Group and Brighton-based Lomax Cassidy and Edwards, is one of the UK's most environmentally friendly buildings. It is filled with gadgets and materials to make it as energy-efficient as possible, including "intelligent" walls which trap hot and cold air and release it when necessary and toilets that are flushed with rainwater. Artificial lights automatically switch on and off with the flow of natural light, while carbon emissions are only 50 per cent of those for a conventional building.

Stage is set for a revamp

A new look for the New Road theatre district



People in Brighton and Hove were asked for their ideas on redesigning the city's theatre district. New Road, which links Brighton's cultural quarter to its shopping zone, will be given a makeover to improve the street scene and make it more pedestrian-friendly. Brighton and Hove City Council has teamed up with international architects who have worked on projects in Milan, London, Zurich, Dublin and Oslo.

More than 60 residents, business people, traders and other organisations contributed their views about the road at a workshop, run by the council earlier this year.

Ideas included making it easier to cross the road from North Street and Church Street, reinstating some of the historic heritage lost over the years, tree planting, installing statues and artwork and reshaping the road. More workshops will be held during the design stage, which runs until November.

The aim of the redesign is to enhance public space in the heart of the city, with New Road one of the key areas. It links the Dome, Royal Pavilion and gardens, Theatre Royal and the Jubilee Library.

Environment councillor Gill Mitchell said: "The project is going to require some great innovation. "As well as being well used by pedestrians, the street is part of an emergency service route - taxis and theatre lorries need to be able to use the road. "It's a complex project and it is going to be exciting to see the ideas people have." Oliver Schulze,

project manager at Gehl Architects, said: "We believe the most successful cities are the ones that are loved by the people who live and work there and also by the people who come to visit and enjoy themselves - like Copenhagen, Melbourne, Lyon and Barcelona.

"All these cities have realised the spaces between buildings are just as important as the buildings themselves."

Green Party ward councillor Keith Taylor said: "We must work hard to integrate this development so it adds to, rather than detracts from the area.

"It is especially important traffic is managed sensitively and we do not create problems in surrounding areas."

Reporter Juliette Bowers went to New Road and asked a number of people for their suggestions about a makeover for the street. Alf Le Flohic, pictured, said: "It all looks a bit tatty. A lot of effort is needed to make it look better. I am not quite sure how many more people it would attract if you pedestrianised it - it could reduce the life on the street without the shop deliveries." Alf, from Hove, a web editor at the University of Brighton, added: "The road is a mess. A surreal sculpture would be nice. It would help with the Brighton Festival feel at that time of year." He said in the autumn when the trees shed their leaves in Pavilion Gardens the view of the Royal Pavilion give passers-by something to focus on. "Bringing the Pavilion Gardens out into the street would be good," he said.

The second workshop met in September to comment on design options before a wider public consultation later in the month.

For more information about the workshops or the project, call 294164 or email jim.mayor@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Your local news - Let us know!

If your organisation or club has something to say, please let us know and we'll do our best to incorporate it in the next issue.

A fund raising day for instance, we could include it in the 'What's on' list.

Olly Kneath joins the Maslen Lewes Road team!

With internal promotions creating the need for a new member of staff Olly joined us in August as a Trainee Negotiator. This is his first full time job after leaving College in the Summer. Olly is passionately interested in property and wants to progress within the industry. He is currently undergoing intensive training with our in-house staff trainer Gill Johnson.



BRIGHTON - NEWS IN BRIEF

Streetlights inspired by the sea

Hove seafront has received 24 new streetlights designed by a Sussex architect. The lights have been erected on the south side of the Kingsway from the Embassy Court end of Hove to Grand Avenue.

They were designed by Ditchling architect Philip Andrews, who said: "I got my inspiration from waves, boats and surf boards. I have tried to reflect the seafront atmosphere in the lights."

Mr Andrews also designed St Peter's House at Brighton University and the Burnes Vale housing scheme in Rottingdean. He was a member of the city's conservation advisory group and offered his services for free when he heard the council was looking for a special street light design to complement the conservation area along the seafront. The lights are made of steel and have undulating lamp holders. They are also designed to withstand the coastal elements.

Councillor Gill Mitchell, chair of the environment committee, said: "The lights are modern yet fit in with the historic area. They have a design unique to Brighton & Hove and, as well as being attractive, will improve safety at night, especially along the cycle lane."

Coastal gem makes a splash at the blooming awards

Rottingdean Village has come-up rosy with a silver medal award at the prestigious Britain in Bloom competition.

Judges at the award ceremony, held in Cardiff on 28 September said, "A pleasant morning greeted the judges for the tour of this attractive and seduced coastal entrant, nesting in a chalk valley on the edge of the Sussex downs.

"Hidden gems abound, with the Kipling Gardens, croquet lawn, bowling green, Beacon Hill Local Nature Reserve, numerous quiet courtyards and mews areas were shown to the judges."

Rottingdean was also awarded a Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom Conservation and Environment Award for Beacon Hill Nature Reserve. Paddy Magee, from Rottingdean received a Britain in Bloom Commendation.

Environment councillor, Gill Mitchell said, "This is a wonderful achievement for Rottingdean that everyone can be proud of. Paddy has put in tremendous effort and his work planting lots of the high street tubs and pots and maintaining them made such a difference. His commendation is a well deserved recognition of the work he's done."

Email version of our Newsletter

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Might Sell, Might Not!

The current market is as near a “normal” market as experienced estate agents have known for years in terms of the balance between properties available for sale and registered buyers.

However, unlike most “normal” markets, some sellers are not as committed to selling as they might be, and are prepared to remain on the market until what they regard as an acceptable offer comes along.

Likewise, some buyers, whilst generally remaining committed to a purchase, do not exhibit a great deal of urgency, and believe that they are entitled to submit a relatively low offer in the current market.

There are two issues here and we would advise caution to buyer and seller alike. Firstly, if, as a seller, your house fails to sell for whatever reason, it is probably priced too ambitiously for the current conditions. If you allow it to remain on the market at that price, it may well go stale on the market, resulting in an inevitable fall in price greater than a minor repositioning effected now.

From a buyer's perspective, we suggest

you focus on securing the right home for your needs, within your budget, more than on finding the greatest bargain. A percentage of the asking price is irrelevant if the asking price is too much to begin with, but a well-priced property is always in demand and unless you act decisively, you could miss out. The rule of thumb is this; if you see a property that you can afford, which offers you the accommodation you need in an area you like, and you could be happy there, then snap it up, as the chances are that most of the other buyers in your price range will also want that property. Good value is good value - in any market.

Did you know?

St Peter's Church

- *St Peter's Church was built as a result of a competition in 1824 to design a new chapel on the Steine.*
- *It was the first master piece of the architect Sir Charles Barry. He went onto build the Houses of Parliament in Westminster.*
- *St. Peter's Church stands on the river Wellsbourne, a small river that came to surface west of the Palace Pier at low tide. However, by 1793 the waters of the river were running dry and the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Marlborough paid for them to be directed into a brick sewer.*
- *The church is built of Portland limestone but the extension by Somer Clarke's is of superior Sussex sandstone, hence the building's distinctive 'two-tone' appearance.*
- *The first priest was the Reverend Thomas Cook who remained for 45 years until St Peter's became Brighton Parish Church in 1873. The font, made from Sussex marble, was given by his widow as a memorial to him.*
- *St Peter's has a ring of ten bells with the tenor, in D, weighing twenty five and a half hundredweight. An amplified recording of the bells serves the Church of St Peter del Mar on the Pacific coast near San Diego, California.*

Park revamp moves to new £10m phase

Developers are embarking on the next phase of an ambitious plan to transform a notorious eyesore into a thriving business park. St Modwen Developments is about to submit a planning application to build an extra 46,000 sqft of office space in eight buildings at the former Sunblest bakery site in Woodingdean, Brighton.

The £10 million development is a response to increased demand for quality smaller-scale office spaces in Brighton and Hove, Simon Forest, of managing agents Oakley Property, said. The 9.5 acre site fell into disrepair and became a target for flytippers and arsonists after it was vacated by Allied Bakers in 1994. It was bought by St Modwen in 1998 and has since undergone a radical transformation. The £3.5 million first phase of the Woodingdean Business Park - a 19,000 sq ft office complex called Castle House - was finished last year. About three-quarters of the office space has been let to various local firms, including clinical suppliers Shermond International. PS Property

Consultants, which is relocating from Lewes, has taken a nine-year lease on 3,370 sqft of offices at an annual rent of £15.95 per sqft. Building firm Rok has taken 3,350 sqft on a ten-year lease at a similar rent. Phase two, a £2.5 million development of eight large industrial buildings on the site, was completed earlier this year and six of the units have been sold. The biggest industrial take-up has been by Sabre Telecom, which has acquired 5,850 sqft. Brighton Trade Windows and Ultimate Hair Supplies have also bought units. Mr Forest said: "The continued success of our Woodingdean scheme is encouraging and we are well advanced with plans for the third phase, which will be submitted for planning this month. "We are responding to market forces and we have picked up on a demand for the smaller-type office units for small to medium-sized firms. "Rather than rented, the offices will be sold on long, zero ground rent leases, which are virtually a freehold. "People want to own rather than rent at the moment. One of the reasons why Woodingdean is so popular is because of parking. "Workers there

do not have to contend with the congestion and parking problems of the city centre. "Many of the businesses operate throughout Sussex so it is a good base for them to get around." Each of the eight units in phase three can be divided down into two self contained units with potential for up to 16 separate occupiers. The fourth and final phase of the Woodingdean business park project is in the initial stages of planning. Mr Forest said it would be the biggest development on the site so far.



Courtesy of Brighton and Hove Leader