



An insider's quirky guide to what to do and where to go in Brighton!

Written by Andrew Campbell-Kearsey for botanica2016

Hi, my name's Andrew and I live in Brighton. I used to be a head teacher in London and Brighton in a former life. Now I make things up! I love to write and have written about two hundred and fifty stories and more than one hundred of them have been published. Thorny Devil Productions have made two films based on my short stories and they were screened at the Hollyshorts Film Festival in 2013 and 2014. I have had two short story collections published: Brighton Shorts and Centurionman. Both are available from Amazon.

I'm very fortunate to have a sea view from my home and am at my happiest when I'm walking my two terriers along Brighton's beautiful seafront. I hope you find my insider's guide to Brighton for botanica2016 interesting and useful and I wish you a wonderful conference!

Welcome to Brighton!

Brighton and Hove became a city in 2000. The Queen had the power to create two new cities to celebrate the Millennium. The towns of Brighton and Hove were joined to form the new city, alongside Wolverhampton in the Midlands. There has always been friendly rivalry between Hove and Brighton. There are still two town halls.

We have two universities at Falmer: Brighton University and the University of Sussex (location of botanica2016) which brings a constant stream of young people to the city as well as helping to make the city more ethnically diverse. We have many overseas students too.

Brighton is geographically small, yet has many different localities. In central Brighton we have **the Lanes**, which is where the original fishing village of Brighthelmstone was located. There are narrow streets with many jewellery shops and is geared towards tourists. **The North Laine area** is Brighton at its best. It has many quirky, independent cafes and shops. Most of our vintage shops can be



found there. If you're in a hurry, at least visit the pedestrianised **Kensington Gardens** to get a feel of the area. If you have time, wander around Snooper's Paradise.

Between 11 and 15 percent of the population identify themselves along the LGBT spectrum and the annual Gay Pride Festival on the first Saturday is a cause for the whole city to celebrate.

Politically, Brighton stands out as the only constituency in the United Kingdom with a member of parliament for the Green party. This is the popular Caroline Lucas.

Our proximity to London means that it is a popular destination for day-trippers from the capital. We also have the nickname of 'London by the Sea' due to the buzz of the city and the range of events taking place here. We also are proud of the reputation for being a place for couples having a 'Dirty Weekend' away from their spouses!

Brighton and Hove aspires to be San Francisco when it grows up. After all, we are hilly, have a disproportionate number of residents involved in the arts, are famous for IT and media start-ups, we have a large gay population, with a bohemian atmosphere and we are by the sea...

The seafront is being developed. We have a wooden boardwalk and lots of cafes and shops. **The Palace Pier** is the only working pier. We have 3. The Chain Pier was washed away in 1896. The West Pier was closed by the council in 1970 and sustained a fire in 2003 and storm damage. It is a listed building so the haunting remains are still out to see.

The i360 has been constructed directly in front of the ruins of the West Pier. Built by the same company who constructed the London Eye, the i360 is set to open in July this year. As part of the project, funding was secured to restore the arches along the seafront which are now home to interesting shops and galleries.



Brighton was the scene for Bank Holiday gang clashes between the Mods and Rockers in the 1960's immortalised on film by the Who's *Quadrophenia*.

Graham Greene's '*Brighton Rock*' looked at the underbelly of small time criminals in the 1940s.

Due to the popularity of cheap flights and package holidays with a greater chance of good weather, Brighton ceased to be a destination for British families for their annual holiday. Many seaside towns in Britain are in decline but Brighton has reinvented itself. We are a popular centre for international conferences throughout the year and a centre of excellence for the learning of English as a second language. We host the annual political party conferences here every September.

We have many Seafront hotels. **The Grand** (location for the botanica2016 gala dinner) is perhaps the most famous and is an ideal location for afternoon tea. The IRA unsuccessfully attempted to murder the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1984 by planting a bomb in the hotel.

Regency Square, Palmeira Square and **Adelaide Crescent** are fine examples of Regency architecture.

The Royal Pavilion is Brighton's most iconic building. The Royal Pavilion also known as the Brighton Pavilion is a former royal residence located in Brighton. It was built in three stages, beginning in 1787, as a seaside retreat for George, Prince of Wales, who became the Prince Regent in 1811. It is built in the Indo-Saracenic style prevalent in India for most of the 19th century. The current appearance of the Pavilion, with its domes and minarets, is the work of architect John Nash, who extended the building starting in 1815. The interior has to be seen to be believed. The gold dragons are stunning.

When Queen Victoria ascended to the throne in 1837 she began a tour of her royal palaces. She hated the pavilion so much that it was sold to the people of Brighton for £44,000 and she had her favourite furniture taken to Buckingham Palace.



The Brighton Dome has had many purposes. Originally, George the Fourth used the building as a stable for his horses. During the First World War it was transformed into a military hospital for injured Indian soldiers as it was believed that the architecture would make them feel at home. In 1974 it was chosen as the venue for the Eurovision Song Contest...a group called ABBA won with a song called "Waterloo". The Dome is now a major venue and showcases many international acts.

The Brighton Festival in May, starts off the summer and brings tens of thousands of people to the city with a comprehensive array of theatre, dance, performance art, debate events. The city is also host to The Great Escape during the festival where seemingly everywhere becomes a music venue. The festival begins on the first Saturday of May with the Children's parade where 120 schools take part in a procession throughout the streets of Brighton, culminating at the seafront.

We are the final destination for the veteran car London-to-Brighton run every November. We have a half marathon every February and a full marathon every April.

Our football team, Brighton and Hove Albion, 'The Seagulls' are doing well this season and they play at their stadium at Falmer.

When it comes to food...we have over 800 places to eat registered on Tripadvisor. A visitor will never go hungry!

Here are some of my favourites:

Pompoko...a Japanese noodle bar opposite the Dome

Pho...a Vietnamese restaurant in the Lanes

Bankers...a fish and chip restaurant on Western Road

Planet India...a vegetarian Indian restaurant by St Peter's church

Famous Szechuan...a Chinese restaurant on Queen's Road near the station

VIP...a Neapolitan pizza and pasta restaurant on the Old Steyne near the Brighton Pier

Al Duomo...a family run Italian restaurant near the Pavilion.



For lunch, try **Green Chair** on Queen's Road, **Pop Pie** on Church Street, **Burger Brothers** on North Road or **Iydea** in Kensington Gardens in the North Laine.

A visitor won't go thirsty either. There are so many pubs, bars and clubs. Sunday lunch is a great way to eat, but it is best to book in advance. One of my favourite pubs is the **Sussex Yeoman** in Brighton centre, near the train station. There you can be assured of fantastic local fresh food, great beer and a friendly crowd!

Getting around the area is also easy with great train and bus services. You can be in London within the hour by train. Taxis are easy to find. They are blue and white and have the logo of the council which is the Brighton Pavilion. The taxi ranks are located at the train station, the clocktower and on East Street opposite the Pavilion.

We have many wonderful green spaces within easy reach such as Devil's Dyke, Ditchling Beacon, the South Downs and the Seven Sisters.

Enjoy your stay in Brighton, I am sure you will want to return!

Andrew