

## Living by degrees



**Kristin Conard** misses summer already

I popped into Churchill Square the other day. I walked through aimlessly, looking at lots of stuff I'd like to have, but wouldn't let myself buy. As much as I liked the pair of black strappy high-heeled shoes, I had no reason to get them, seeing as I already have two pairs of black strappy high-heeled shoes that I haven't worn more than a dozen times.

And I hate waiting in line for the changing rooms, then another line again as you get the right size and then the final line for the register. The really sad moment comes when they tell me how much I have to pay and I almost gag because inevitably I can hear my mother's voice asking me if I really need that new top/pair of trousers/whatever. As well as realising that however much money I'm spending on clothes is money that I'm not spending on rent or tuition or food – or more importantly – on alcohol and club entries. So it's just window shopping for me.

But more to the point, as I walked outside I was shocked. I'd gone in during the middle of the afternoon, and now it was getting dark! Couldn't believe it. Not just that I had been in there so long with nothing to show for it but sore feet and the beginning of a bruise on my arm from ploughing through groups of French kids on holiday, but because it was still so early! It's not supposed to get dark until after nine.

But summer is, sadly and definitely almost (I wouldn't admit it's really gone) over. This realisation was emphasised the next morning when I hauled my lazy butt out of bed to go to work and noticed loads of kids walking to school. I smiled as a mum told her daughter, who was skipping ahead of her, to slow down. It's hard to believe that I was ever that small or eager for school. Almost enviable really, to be little with no heartbreak from first loves to get over, exams to study for, dissertations to write, rent to pay, etc.

And there were more people in general on the streets. All the students who left Brighton are now making their way back. I met some of them last week as I looked for a house, which (thank goodness) I've now found. There were the freshers who were looking at places with their parents. They looked so young and innocent and sweet. All excited about coming to uni, leaving home for the first time, getting to do all sorts of new things. Things that will definitely include alcohol and most probably, because it's Brighton, a drag queen or two, especially if they drop in on Boogaloo Stu or Dolly Rocket. I still can't determine if she's a man dressed as a woman or a woman dressed as a man dressing as a woman. If anyone can sort that out for me, I'd appreciate it.

Then there's the rest of us, who think that we've done it all and seen it all. As if we are so much older and experienced, separated usually by only a year or two. We know our timetable and our professors and what to expect. I wonder if proper adults look at university students and feel a twinge of envy for us like I did for that little girl. I know that many of them seem to think that students are just loud, in-the-way scroungers, but do they sometimes want to be able to go back to the days when you would get a month off for Christmas, Easter and three for the summer? I think that they must, because let's face it, it's pretty great to be a student in Brighton. We're going to come out of here with a degree that will let us conquer the world, or at least let us get jobs and not play the banjo on the street corner, and have lived it up in one of the greatest cities in the country.