

# Coachwerks becomes 19a

After 15 years Coachwerks is coming to an end. However, the activity will continue under a new name, 19a, and occupy the same small industrial unit at the end of Hollingdean Terrace.



Coachwerks owes a huge debt to many individuals who have committed physically, emotionally and financially to its continuation. The site was initially leased by Ian Elwick in 2008, and since then, it has been home to a range of tenants, from sculptors to brewers, stone carvers to weavers. Graeme and Maggs were among the first to transform what was previously a coach garage and together with Javi Otero and the dance group they built the first studios. In later years, the Matts brought an injection of enthusiasm with Bartleby's brewery. Ryan of Hail Seitan! began serving food, and Bill and Megan started EarthSea Wholefoods, sowing the seeds that have grown into the network of volunteers that now run Hollingdean Wholefoods with Gemma and Leila.

The future of 19a was secured with the purchase of the site on February 1st, which means the threat of development has finally receded. This has been made possible thanks to an enormous amount of support from tenants, friends, family, and a very talented mortgage broker, Roy Had-dock (yoursf.co.uk).

There are too many people to thank individually here for their support over the years but a few names do stand out. Cyril Holas with his inexhaustible enthusiasm has played a crucial role in helping to keep the building maintained, and without Paco Torres we would never have become involved. The continuation of the community dark-room owes a great deal to Paul Jen-

kins. And without Jo Minnitt there would be no website (19a.org). Two of our longest standing tenants are Jane Woodrow and Tommo Clubley who have stuck with the project through some challenging times. We also hope that Polly Charlton and Ben Jones, as two of Coachwerks' longest supporters – and Mummers performers, will continue to shape its future.

Moving forwards, the WerksGroup will not be involved and we will continue to develop our ethos supporting creativity and the community. Fundamentally, this means doing more of the same but with some improvements. Now that the site is secure, we can think about investing in the long-term future of the activity, making the shop and gallery more accessible and improving the condition of the building. The site itself is underdeveloped and providing more studio and workshop spaces makes sense given the inherent short supply in Brighton.

Over the last couple of years, we have also been experimenting growing crops (hydroponically) on the roof. As supply chain concerns continue to grow, supporting urban food development, both educationally and practically, is something we want to consider. At the same time, Coachwerks has historically been shaped by the people who have spent time here, and this is something that will continue. This means taking time to talk to both our tenants and the wider community over the next few months as we plan what comes next.

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