

The Suss-Ex Club

Newsletter 56

June 2021



For ex-University of Sussex staff: keeping in touch, keeping connected

Welcome to our new look Suss-Ex Club Newsletter!

This is our 56th Newsletter since Suss-Ex Club was launched back in 2006. A lot has happened since then including the massive use of social media and other online platforms to link up and communicate. In that spirit, Suss-Ex launched a Facebook group, which is now just over 12 months old. New memberships are coming through in healthy numbers, we have shared some photos of past events, and have reconnected with ex-colleagues.



Launch event 2006

Suss-Ex also launched some online Zoom talks which proved very popular and meant that we could link up with members from far afield - it was great to hear genuine cries of delight as members recognised someone from their time at Sussex on the Zoom gallery view.

In the light of these recent developments, the steering group undertook a review of the Newsletter, the result of which you will see in this new look 56th edition. In particular we are featuring a new item - **Spotlight on...** - where we share the post-Sussex adventures of ex-Sussex staff. This issue features **Janet Aspley**, whom many of you may remember as the University's Staff Development Advisor. See what Janet has been getting up to since leaving Sussex – we hope you find it inspirational!

Also, are there any colleagues you knew at Sussex whom you have lost touch with? Why not send us a short description of where and when you worked with them, including names, and we will put that in our **Where are they now?** feature. You never know, someone may be able to re-connect you...

This Newsletter includes our next event (Ridgeway Vineyard visit), which was postponed due to Covid. Watch out for updates on future events planned for the summer when lockdown restrictions will hopefully have been lifted.

And to finish, no Newsletter is complete without its members and their contributions. If you have stories, or ideas, please email them to us (contact details in our Newsletter footer) or post them to our [FB page](#).

Suss-Ex Club Steering Group

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OUR NEXT EVENT

Ridgeview Vineyard and Winery visit - Friday 23rd July

We are very pleased to announce a return visit to the Ridgeview Wine Estate, Ditchling, on Friday 23rd July 2021 (we first went there in 2014 on a visit organised by Sue Bullock and had a very enjoyable time).

The tour of the vineyard will start at 12.30pm after which we will be shown how their high-class wines are produced. This will conclude with a wine tasting session.



The tour will last for about an hour and a half. There will be an opportunity to obtain a light lunch afterwards in their new café (optional). The cost of the tour and wine tasting is **£20** per person. The lunch will be extra.

As the number of people on the tour is limited to just 20, tickets will be allocated on a first come first served basis. For further details, menu options and the booking form, you can download [further details](#), the [menu options](#), and the booking form as a [Word](#) document for you to type into or a [PDF](#) to print out and write on.

Save the Date – Summer picnic!

After last year's successful summer picnic on campus, we are planning a repeat event on **Thursday 26th August 2 – 5pm**. The blackberries should be plenty at this time of year – we certainly picked quite an abundance last year!

Further details to follow, including details about other events that were put on hold due to Covid restrictions.

Spotlight on... Janet Aspley!

We are really pleased to be launching our new Newsletter feature where we share the journey of a Suss-Ex member post University of Sussex – we kickstart this brand new feature with the unique and inspiring story of **Janet Aspley**.

From Lewes to Tennessee, and back

For those who came into contact with Janet Aspley in her role as Staff Development Advisor (2003 – 2014), probably the last thing that might have come to mind was rhinestones and tassels. But these were very much part of Janet's life after leaving Sussex!

Before our imaginations run wild, Janet had in fact transformed her life-long passion for textiles and sewing into a study of Dress History, adding her love of country music to gain a PhD entitled '*Hillbilly Deluxe: Male Performance Dress and Authenticity In Country Music 1947 – 1991*'. But what did Janet do before the dazzling lights of Tennessee beckoned?

Janet began her career as a Textile Purchasing Officer (hmmm.... is a *pattern* emerging?) in the Civil Service, moving after a couple of years into staff development.

After a period of freelance work, she joined the small Staff Development team at a time of significant growth and organisational change at Sussex. Janet was key in introducing new training programmes to meet new needs and roles. The popular Women's Action Learning Sets that Janet developed continue to run at Sussex, alongside various management programmes that she initiated.

In parallel with the day job, Janet continued to nurture her creativity – she designed and sewed for herself and her young family, alongside contributing articles to *Country Music People* magazine which took her to Nashville (Tennessee). It was here where, rubbing shoulders with the showbiz giants of country music, she was inspired by the sparkling, embroidered men's outfits known as 'Nudie suits' that are so much a part of this musical tradition.

It was getting an AHRC PhD fellowship that enabled Janet to leave her job at Sussex in 2014 to do a PhD.

Despite doing a History degree at Cambridge, undertaking a PhD was a leap of faith. Janet eagerly acknowledges the encouragement and guidance that was generously given by colleagues at Sussex - Liz James (Professor of History of Art), and Clive Webb (Professor of American History). Dr Janet Aspley graduated in February 2020 and has since taught at London College of Fashion and Brighton University.





Whilst studying, Janet acquired an original 1940s western shirt pattern. These have a specific design and look, so making these shirts takes a lot of skill.

Janet gave one of her first creations to Grammy-winning singer songwriter [Jim Lauderdale](#) whilst interviewing him in London, and word of mouth did the rest!

Since then, Janet has since successfully established her own brand, 'Dandy & Rose'. She makes custom western shirts from original Liberty-print fabrics. Her creations have been worn around the world on stage, TV and in the movies, and were displayed in the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2017.

So what next for Janet?

Janet explains that her unique shirts rely heavily on live music performances, so sadly Covid has had its impact over the past year. In the meantime Janet can be found working very happily in a part-time role at Lewes Library.

Janet has fond memories of Sussex and has drawn extensively on the skills she developed whilst working there - the academic environment and support she received from colleagues were invaluable to her.

Looking back at the *threads* of her journey from Lewes to Tennessee and back what, we asked her, would be the one piece of advice she would give herself? "There is no fitting problem that can't be solved without a lurex shoelace!"

Well, we certainly hope to see more of what Janet does next – with or without lurex.

Janet's journey and some of her creations, can be seen here: <https://dandyandrose.com/>

Interview and piece written by Rossana Dowsett and Sara Hinchliffe.



Have you gone on to do something interesting or perhaps you have achieved a life-long ambition after leaving Sussex? Or you know someone who has? We would love to know! Get in touch with the editors at: rossana.dowsett@ntlworld.com

The Honey Bee: the world's most amazing animal!

More than 50 members of Suss-Ex joined a Zoom talk by Professor Francis Ratnieks, the UK's first professor of apiculture, from the University of Sussex on 17 March.

This fascinating talk, packed with lots of interesting facts, covered the honey bee and its importance to humans, for pollination and for the production of honey. In Francis' view the honey bee – numbering in the trillions and spreading over all continents except Antarctica – isn't endangered. We also discussed some of the joys of beekeeping for pleasure and how gardeners can encourage bees (a good plant to sow to attract bees is English marjoram, which participants rushed to buy and plant!).

In short, we all came away armed with a better understanding of the honey bee and how to encourage the species into our gardens to thrive.

More information about Francis and the work of his lab – LASI (the Laboratory of Apiculture and Social Insects) can be found on the lab website: www.sussex.ac.uk/lasi.



OTHER EVENTS

Members may be interested in other upcoming University of Sussex events available to them. You can see a full list and register for them on the Development and Alumni Relations website: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/alumni/news-events/events>

Suss-Ex Club Facebook Group – membership creeping up!

We are really pleased that the launch of our Facebook group last year is continuing to increase our membership as ex-Sussex employees gradually get to know about us. At the time of writing we currently have 114 members on the Facebook group page, who come from all parts of the University. They include academic staff, administrative faculty, support and technical staff, and are a mixture of retirees, the part retired and those who have moved on to other jobs.



We rely on everyone who has joined the Facebook group to encourage even more ex-staff to join. It's a quick and easy way of communicating with each other. Information about forthcoming events will always be posted on this page and usually ahead of members receiving the information by email. It's also open to members themselves to post any memories or photos they may have that might be of interest to other members.

Recently several photos of past Suss-Ex Club events have been uploaded to the Facebook page, so if you're new to Suss-Ex you can see the kind of thing we've arranged in the past.

However, you won't be able to see any posts there until you've actually joined as it's a private closed group and not viewable by the general public. If you haven't tried our Facebook page yet, give it a go! Post your memories and tag colleagues so that we can share your highlights from Sussex: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2507222389510329>

Who has been publishing?

We all know that an academic career is for life, even if you are no longer on the University's payroll! Members will be interested to know about your recent publications, with links to further information. Also, we know that many former staff who had non-academic roles publish on a variety of subjects too and Suss-Ex members would like to hear about your output as well. Send details/links about your publications to Charles Goldie: C.M.Goldie@sussex.ac.uk

Friendship corner: where are they now?

This is a new feature where members can post enquiries about the whereabouts of former colleagues they have lost contact with but with whom they'd like to re-connect. Just send us information about you and the people you'd like to get back in touch with, including when and where you worked with them. You never know, someone in the Club may be able help...

Also, did you make a life-long friend at the University? Tell us about this – where did you meet, was it your mutual interest that pulled you together? A shared work experience? Anything at all! We look forward to hearing from you: rossana.dowsett@ntlworld.com

A 'thank you' to Adrian

Adrian Peasgood, who has served on our Steering Group (committee) from its foundation in 2006 up to now, has retired from the Group. Adrian was a member of Library staff from the 1960s and at retirement was the University Librarian. He is a fan of the 'little theatres' - amateur theatre groups - of Brighton and Lewes, and initiated and organised several group visits to see their best productions. By contrast he also organised a memorable Suss-Ex tour of Veolia's Waste Management Facility at Hollingdean in Brighton. For the last few years he has edited our Newsletter. At its June meeting the Steering Group recorded its heartfelt thanks to Adrian for his long and devoted service to Suss-Ex – we hope to continue seeing Adrian at our various events and outings.



OBITUARIES

The Suss-Ex Club always wishes to note the passing away of ex members of staff, and in particular their contribution to the University and its life. A full list of obituaries is on the [Suss-Ex website](#). In this edition we note with regret those added to the list in 2021. Mostly these record the recent loss of an ex-colleague, while those from earlier years report a death not previously noted. Let us know if there is anyone we've missed. The obituaries below are presented as links, but those commissioned for this Newsletter are also appended to its PDF version.

Peter Abbs, Creative Writing, died December 2020, aged 78.

[Sussex News and Events](#), [The Guardian](#), [The Times](#)



Giovanni Carsaniga, Italian Studies, died March 2016, aged 82.

[Australasian Centre for Italian Studies](#), [Sydney Morning Herald](#), [Australian Academy of the Humanities](#)

A.L. 'Bill' Epstein, Social Anthropology, died 1999, aged 75.

[Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology](#), [The Guardian](#), [The Independent](#)



Sir Leslie Fielding, Diplomat and former VC, died March 2021, aged 88.

[Sussex News and Events](#), [The Times](#), [UACES](#)

John Haigh, Mathematics, died March 2021, aged 79.

[Sussex News and Events](#), [The Guardian](#)



David Harrison, Sociology, died April 2021, aged 79.

[Suss-Ex Club](#) (obituary commissioned for this Newsletter)

Harold Hodson, Medicinal Chemistry, died March 2021; aged 88.

[Suss-Ex Club](#) (obituary commissioned for this Newsletter)



Nancy Holmes, Administrator, died December 2020, aged 91.

[Suss-Ex Club](#) (obituary commissioned for this Newsletter)

Aubrey Jenkins, Chemistry, died April 2021, aged 93.

[Suss-Ex Club](#) (obituary commissioned for this Newsletter)



Mike Land, Neuroscience, died December 2020, aged 78.

[Sussex News and Events](#), [The Guardian](#), [Current Biology](#)

Greg Lawden, Mathematics, died January 2021; aged 80.

[Suss-Ex Club](#) (obituary commissioned for this Newsletter)



Sir John Lyons, Linguistics, died March 2020, aged 78.

[Trinity Hall, Cambridge](#), [British Academy](#)

Garry Runciman (Viscount Runciman), Sociology, died December 2020; aged 86.

[The Guardian](#), [Trinity College, Cambridge](#), [The Times](#), [Child Poverty Action Group](#)



Brian Street, Anthropology, died 2017, aged 73.

[Royal Anthropological Institute](#), [Anthropology Today](#)

Gerry Webster, Biology, died April 2021; aged 82.

[Sussex News and Events](#)



Biographical Memoirs – British Academy and Royal Society

Members may be interested to know that the [British Academy](#) and the [Royal Society](#) make their very thorough Biographical Memoirs of deceased Fellows available online. Two recently published, on former colleagues whose deaths have previously been noted, are those for [Geoffrey Best](#) and [Edward Fraenkel](#).

Who are we?

Patron: Sir Gordon Conway

Founded in 2006 with the support of our patron, the Suss-Ex Club is for all ex-staff of the University with the purpose of keeping us connected and organising social events and activities for its members (partners welcome!).

We benefit from the support of the Alumni Office who maintain our members' database and send out our Newsletters and Event alerts.

More information about Suss-Ex is available on its webpage at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/suss-ex/>. 'Suss-Ex Club' in Google will get you there, as will <http://tiny.cc/sussex>, or you can find us in the A-Z on the University's homepage



Suss-Ex activities are organised by a steering group, which currently comprises:

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You have received this Newsletter because your email address was supplied to, and is held by, the Development and Alumni Relations Office at the University of Sussex.

W: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/suss-ex/>

David Henry Harrison, 2nd February 1941 - 6th April 2021



David Harrison

in Fiji

David Harrison was appointed to a lectureship in Sociology in the School of African and Asian Studies in 1976. He came late to academia. Leaving school at 16, he first worked in a bank and as a customs officer before training to be a teacher. Later, he enrolled for a sociology degree at Goldsmiths, before completing a PhD at UCL based on fieldwork in the Caribbean. He was 35 when he was appointed at Sussex, his first academic job.

He taught at the University for more than twenty years. He had a strong interest in 'Third World' societies and in 1988 published *The Sociology of Modernization and Development*, a major work reviewing the often-tendentious academic debates at that time about why poorer countries fail to develop, and the best way to grow their economies.

Both a guide for students (it was very clearly written) and a contribution to the literature in its own right, the book critically evaluated 'modernization theories' (basically, every country has to go through similar stages of development) and Marxist-inspired 'underdevelopment theories' (participating in the global capitalist system is what keeps poorer countries poor) and concluded that they were not as incompatible as their adherents supposed. It was possible to find common ground; theorists needed to come out of their silos.

This rejection of extremes, and a desire to ground theories in evidence, was characteristic of all David's work. He was an inspired teacher of undergraduates (his courses were always over-subscribed), and he supervised many doctoral students during his time at Sussex - people who went on to academic careers of their own and who still hold David in the highest regard. He was also a diligent and committed colleague, someone who happily took on thankless tasks which others sought to avoid.



On Richmond Hill

overlooking the Thames

After leaving Sussex, David built an international reputation in tourism studies, first as Professor of Tourism at London Metropolitan, and later heading the Tourism programme at the University of the South Pacific. He also held positions at King's College and Surrey and Middlesex Universities. He always felt that his contributions at Sussex had not been fully recognised, but he more-than made up for that in the glittering career that followed.

He died in London, aged 80.

Peter Saunders

Webpage maintained by [Charles Goldie](#) for the [Suss-Ex Club](#), the association for ex-staff of the [University of Sussex](#).



The contents of this webpage are the responsibility of the Suss-Ex Club, not that of the University of Sussex or any of its Units.

Harold F. Hodson

13 August 1932 – 8 March 2021



Harold Hodson, a distinguished scientist in the pharmaceutical industry who played a major part in setting up degree courses in Medicinal Chemistry at Sussex, has died at the age of 88.

He was born in Stafford and was educated at King Edward VI Grammar School there. A childhood love of chemistry led him in 1950 to attend the newly established University of Keele as one of its first, pioneering students. The University was founded as a joint venture between Oxford University, the University of Manchester and the Workers Educational Association, with an unusually broad academic agenda designed to ensure that students gained an all-round education in natural and social sciences alongside their chosen specialist subjects. The Vice Chancellor had been Master of Balliol College Oxford and it is interesting to note that this interdisciplinary approach was adopted by the University of Sussex some years later with John Fulton, another Balliol man, as its founding Vice Chancellor.

After his first degree, Harold moved to work with two giants in the chemistry of naturally-occurring alkaloids, compounds which exhibit a variety of pharmacological activities. He was first a PhD student with George Smith at Manchester and then a post-doctoral research worker with Alan Battersby at Bristol.

He moved from Bristol to the Wellcome Research Laboratories at Beckenham and stayed there for most of his career. He rose to be Head of Organic Chemistry but it was his unusually wide range of scientific knowledge, ranging from pure chemistry to the medicinal and pharmacological sciences that made him especially valuable to the company. His experience and knowledge of the biological side of the research meant that he was sought-after as a partner in many important research programmes. He co-authored around 275 patents in addition to a number of peer-reviewed scientific publications, one of which had nearly 2000 citations – a truly impressive number!

In the early 1980s, Harold's interest in scientific education led to his involvement with the School of Molecular Sciences at Sussex in setting up first a Master's degree and later a Bachelor's degree in Medicinal Chemistry. His wide scientific interests allowed a comprehensive course to be developed and he was able to persuade scientists in the pharmaceutical industry to give freely of their time and expertise in teaching courses in a range relevant disciplines. Harold contributed not only to the planning of the courses

but also to teaching of parts of them. The degrees ran at Sussex for two decades and many of our students found fulfilling careers in the pharmaceutical industry.

Scientists from Wellcome were joined in this project by others from Glaxo, thanks to Dr Dick Storer, a Sussex graduate, and, as time passed and people moved companies, industrial input to the courses widened.

The University recognised Harold's contributions by appointing him an Honorary Visiting Professor.

Harold's service on the committee of the Royal Society of Chemistry's Bio-Organic Group led to the start of a successful UK-wide annual meeting for post-graduate students and sponsorship of a variety of international meetings, including a meeting at Oxford to celebrate the 75th birthday of the Sussex Nobel Prizewinner, Sir John Cornforth.

Harold is survived by his wife Winnie, his children Karen, Andrea and Neil and seven grandchildren.

Douglas Young

Nancy Holmes 11.03.1929 to 23.12.2020



Nancy Holmes, secretary and administrator in both Science and Arts areas of the University, has died, aged 91.

After several years as a legal secretary and “a frightening interview” in Stanmer House, where the University Administration was housed temporarily, she was appointed to the newly established Chemistry Subject Group in July 1962 and, for many of us, was the first person we met when we reported for work at Sussex. She travelled from her home in High Hurstwood for several years before moving to Brighton.

Those of us who were involved in setting up chemistry at Sussex congratulated ourselves on building an internationally acclaimed department in just a few years. However, our academic success relied heavily on the calibre of our supporting staff, including the Subject group/School Secretary, and the other people who worked in the School Office. Those who recruited Nancy were shrewd and discerning; the rest of us benefitted enormously.

Much of our present office equipment did not exist 57 years ago. Nancy had to work without computers, mobile phones, email, and electronic spreadsheets. Few academic staff or students could type. Work had to be passed to a secretary to be prepared for publication. Research papers, teaching materials, timetables, examination papers, mark lists, and letters had to be typed by use of machines that could not cope with chemical or other scientific symbols.

Alan Pidcock, one of the founding members of the Chemistry Subject Group, was appointed before he completed his D Phil thesis at Oxford. As this contained complicated mathematical equations, the head of department, Colin Eaborn, suggested that Nancy type the thesis “to help to acquaint her with more technical aspects of her typing role”. Alan still cherishes Nancy’s top copy.

She was self-effacing, but well organised and determined, resilient in the face of difficulty, and, at the same time, gracious and generous, ready to help, and optimistic. Her kindness was shown in her regular visits to Colin’s widow Joyce, after he died in 2004.

By 1971 Colin had become Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Science). When he relinquished this post, Nancy became secretary to a succession of Pro-Vice Chancellors (Arts) from Reg Mutter (1971-3) to Margaret McGowan (1992-7), with an interval (1974-6) at Brighton Polytechnic (now the University of Brighton). Margaret’s comments match the chemists’: “I found her not only efficient and friendly, but eternally cheerful - whatever disasters threatened. She had a wonderful way of greeting colleagues (old and new) and setting them at their ease. Her knowledge of affairs was so extensive that she would immediately produce the necessary papers and remember previous related issues.” While working full

time at Sussex, she studied for a BA degree at the Open University and this was awarded in 1984.

Nancy was pleased to share her love of the Sussex countryside with those recruited to the University. She was a supporter of the Sussex Wildlife Trust and volunteered to work for the National Trust at Rodmell. When she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, she moved to a care home in Hangleton but continued to come to social events and, when she could no longer drive, made quite elaborate journeys alone by bus.

Pauline Grant, Sheila Massey and David Smith.

Aubrey Dennis Jenkins 6 September 1927 – 25 April 2021



Aubrey was born in London and educated at Dartford Grammar School and the Sir John Cass Technical Institute of the University of London (Now London Metropolitan University). He gained his BSc and PhD at King's College, London, his PhD work being on the decomposition of organic peroxides.

He began his industrial career in 1950 at the Fundamental Research Laboratory of Courtaulds Ltd in Maidenhead, working with CH Bamford. Courtaulds was then one of the world's largest producers of synthetic fibres, using materials based on chemical treatments of cellulose as replacements for cotton. The company was actively seeking synthetic substitutes for silk and became a centre for research in free-radical polymerisations of vinyl monomers, especially acrylonitrile. Aubrey's research focused on the mechanisms and kinetics of these reactions, and he made significant contributions to the understanding of their initiation, retardation, and inhibition, particularly inhibition by transition metal salts. The book "*The Kinetics of Vinyl Polymerization by Radical Mechanisms*" by Bamford, Barb, Jenkins, and Onyon, published in 1958, became a key text for anyone working in the field. The Courtaulds group were the first to propose the idea of "trapped" radicals in acrylonitrile polymerisations and to record the paramagnetic resonance spectrum of a polymeric radical.

Free-radical polymerisations often use monomer mixtures to produce copolymers. Although superficially simple, copolymerisations are actually very complex, the distribution of repeat units in the polymer depending on the relative reactivities of the two monomers and the two possible polymerising radicals. Aubrey worked extensively on the understanding of radical and monomer reactivity, developing an empirical prediction method which became known as the "patterns scheme". This was a topic which interested him throughout his career and into retirement; his first "patterns" paper was published in 1959 and the last in 2000.

Aubrey left Courtaulds in 1960 and moved to the Fundamental Research Laboratory of the Gillette company, where he worked on the chemistry of hair treatments, spending three years at their laboratories in Reading and one at their Harris Research Laboratories in Washington.

He moved to Sussex in 1964, as Senior Lecturer in Chemistry, one of the early appointments in the newly created School. After promotion to Reader, he was appointed to a Chair in 1971 and served as Dean for most of the 1970s. In Sussex he continued research into the kinetics of radical polymerisation and also developed interests in organometallic compounds as initiators for acrylonitrile polymerisation, controlled structure polymers via enolate-initiated reactions, preparation of polymers with liquid crystal character and synthesis of polymers bearing fluorescent groups. A good deal of this work was done in collaboration with David Walton in Sussex, and he also worked with Mitch Winnick and Jim Guillet in Canada.

The first major post-war international conferences on polymers to be held behind the Iron Curtain took place in Prague in 1957 and 1964. Many UK polymer scientists attended and discovered a beautiful city and an active research community in the Czech Institute for Macromolecular Chemistry. Aubrey developed a particular affinity for both city and Institute and visited the Czech Institute as often as he could. He eventually split a year's sabbatical leave between Visiting Professorships in Prague and at the University of Massachusetts. He remained closely associated with the Prague Institute and was awarded the Heyrovsky Gold Medal for Chemistry of the Czech Academy of Sciences in 1990. His second wife, Jitka was a staff member at the Prague Institute. He also had collaborations in South America and was made an Honorary Fellow of the Organic Chemistry Society of Argentina in 1993.

Aubrey was prime mover in the setting up of the Sussex undergraduate degree programme in Polymer Science which had a number of successful years before changing fashions led to it becoming Chemistry with Polymer Science, and eventually fading away.

In 1976 Aubrey became involved in the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) and developed a deep involvement in macromolecular nomenclature. He served as chairman of the Committee on Macromolecular Nomenclature from 1977 to 1985 and was for eight years secretary of the Macromolecular Division. He was a member of the British Committee for IUPAC, the UNESCO European Expert Committee on Polymer Science, Industry, and Environment, and the British Library Scientific Committee. He was a fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry and a member of the Society of Chemical Industry. He served as secretary of the UK High Polymer Research Group from 1991 to 2002. His administrative experience gave him stubbornly defended views about the positions of commas and semicolons that were put to good use in setting University examination papers.

Outside his academic life Aubrey was a board member for the Brighton District Health Authority, and the West Sussex Institute of Higher Education (now the University of Chichester). His hobbies included photography and classical music. He had a particular passion for the music of Richard Strauss and rarely missed an opportunity to see a production of a Strauss opera. Even in later life, when he was confined to a wheelchair, he was a regular visitor to both Glyndebourne and Covent Garden whenever Strauss was being performed.

Aubrey is survived by his second wife, Jitka, two sons from his first marriage, nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Norman Billingham

Gregor Harold Lawden, 26th December 1940 – 30th January 2021



Greg in 1977

Gregor Lawden, known to colleagues as Greg, lectured in mathematics at Sussex from 1965 until retirement. His start as a mathematician was unusual in that his research ‘father’ was his actual father, the applied mathematician Derek F. Lawden, under whom Greg embarked on a study of optimisation problems.

Born in Birmingham, he completed his secondary education in New Zealand when the family moved there on his father taking up a Chair at the University of Canterbury. After a first-class honours degree and his time as a research student, Greg returned to the UK to start at Sussex in October 1965 as an Assistant Lecturer. This temporary post was the usual one then for a first appointment, and advancement to Lecturer followed as expected on completion of his PhD in 1966.

Greg had remarkable facility with languages, and while still a research student became fluent in reading and conversational Russian, gave some evening classes on the language (before ever teaching any mathematics) and was appointed to the NZ government panel of translators. He was fluent also in French, German and Italian and had at least a reading knowledge of Spanish, Polish and Greek. His hobby was to study a new language every year, and one of us remembers his remarking that he was looking into the languages of southern Africa that have click consonants. Greg translated into English two mathematical monographs and one textbook, from Russian, French and Polish respectively.

Sussex led the way in promoting degrees with a language component for science students as well as arts, and Greg would give tutorials in the relevant language to mathematics undergraduates about to spend a year abroad. For a period in 1989–90 he served as European Programmes Officer for the whole university, looking after all the degree schemes incorporating years abroad. Those were the early days of the Erasmus scheme and the job eventually fell to professional staff.

Greg was a dedicated teacher, rated very highly by students in formal feedback. Following early retirement in 1993 he continued with a varied load of part-time teaching for many years, including at one point being supplied by Sussex to teach the students of Queen’s University, Ontario, at their Herstmonceux Castle outpost. On his final full retirement in 2004 Sussex University awarded him the title of Emeritus Lecturer.

Charles Goldie and James Hirschfeld