

The Suss-Ex Club

Newsletter 58

February 2022



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

Welcome to Issue 58 of the Suss-Ex Club Newsletter!

Unfortunately, for a second year running the members' Christmas lunch could not take place because of Covid. We therefore decided to organise a first for Suss-Ex - a Christmas social drop-in! You can read about this on [page 3](#) – and watch out for repeats over the year...

Another first for Suss-Ex was a hybrid event – on 25th November we hosted a very interesting talk by Jan Nawrocki, Consultant Urologist (see [page 3](#)), attended on campus by several members but also streamed live via the magic of Zoom. Our Zoom participants included members from far afield who would not have been able to attend in person, so we hope to offer more hybrid events in the coming year.

For this edition we have included a small feature about Daniel Snowman. Daniel recently contacted us with some early photos of the University from 1963 when he held a Junior Lectureship. You can read more about Daniel's adventures on [page 2](#) (*Spotlight on....*).

Also, did you know that since Suss-Ex was founded in 2006, the benefits available to ex-students and ex-staff have evolved, including the way they can be accessed. In discussion with DARO we have updated the range of benefits available to Suss-Ex members and we are very pleased to include a list of these and how to access them on [page 4](#).

We remind everyone that Suss-Ex is for all former Sussex colleagues, whether they've retired or just moved jobs, and former staff are always welcome to join. Joining is free, so if you know any former colleagues who might be interested, do encourage them to sign up either via our [Facebook group page](#) or by completing the membership form on our web page: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/suss-ex/>.

Finally the Suss-Ex steering group is waving goodbye to two long-standing members who have been on the group since its inception. David Smith has organised many varied and interesting events over the years, all of which have been very well attended. Arnold Goldman is also standing down and we thank both him and David for their many contributions.

If you are interested in joining the steering group, please email us (contact details on page 6). Also, if you would like to suggest possible future events and activities, please tell us about those too or post your ideas to our [FB page](#).

Suss-Ex Club Steering Group

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OUR NEXT online EVENT

Let's get Quizzical! Thursday 24th February 6.30pm – 7.30pm



How much do you think you know (or can remember) about the University? Well, whether you are a recent ex-Sussex member or you have long since left the University, we have put together a fun quiz full of surprising factoids drawn from the University's early days to more recent times.

There will be six fun rounds of questions, and you can join in from the comfort of your armchair by the magic of Zoom. Participants will be placed into virtual teams of 4–5 to argue about, we mean agree on, the answers! (Pssss, for a lot of the questions you don't really need to have been there to figure out the answers...).

We will post the joining instructions closer to the date via our Facebook page, and we will also email them out to the membership. In the meantime, keep the evening free!

Another social drop-in, this time Lewes?

Following the success of our Christmas social drop-in in Hove (see [page 3](#)), Suss-Ex is keen to make this a regular feature of our Events calendar. We are looking for a suitable venue in Lewes for a late afternoon/early evening social gathering sometime in March, where we can also reserve some seating. Current suggestions include: The [Depot](#) or [The King's Head](#). If you are a Lewes resident, maybe you can also suggest somewhere suitable?

Further details to follow, on Facebook and via email.

Spotlight on... Daniel Snowman

The Suss-Ex Newsletter team was very pleased to hear from Daniel Snowman just before Christmas – Daniel was appointed to a junior lectureship by Asa Briggs back in the early days of the University in 1963, and he shared some photos of building work in progress from that year.



Daniel is a social and cultural historian and after Sussex went on to follow a varied and interesting career starting with the BBC, where he was Chief Producer (Features) covering radio broadcasts on cultural and historical subjects.

As a member of the London Philharmonic Choir, Daniel has pursued a strong interest in music and musicians, which includes books on the Amadeus Quartet, Plácido Domingo, and a biography of Verdi amongst other publications.

As you can imagine over such an interesting and active life, Daniel has rubbed shoulders with many celebrities over the years ranging from Harry Truman to Pope John-Paul II, all of which he has captured via a series of literary vignettes in his recently published memoir *"Just Passing Through"*.

Daniel still lectures widely around the world and leads music tours to major international festivals. Closer to home, he continues to lecture at the Institute of Historical Research and at the V&A, covering the history of opera and other topics.

Here are some photos that Daniel took in 1963 when the campus was very much a work in progress – photo a) has caused some controversy amongst the steering group as opinion is divided on which building (or buildings) it is ... we would be intrigued to know what you think. You can comment on our Facebook page, or email rossana.dowsett@ntlworld.com



a)



b) Daniel's Father Arthur at Falmer House



c) Daniel and a student (1963)

<https://danielsnowman.org.uk/>

Would you like to recall something interesting you were involved in whilst at the University? Or perhaps you've 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

Lewes walking tour: 8 October 2021



On 8 October 2021 Suss-Ex members joined Lewes historian Marcus Taylor for an excellent, fully subscribed morning walking tour of Lewes.

We saw how a wealth of building materials has created the town's architectural detailing and its distinctive streetscape. We learned how Caen sandstone had been imported to construct Lewes Priory, of the concealed timber framing of Anne of Cleves house and the local production of bricks and glazed mathematical tiles.

We walked from Trinity church on Southover High Street via Southover Grange and the 15th century bookshop on Keere Street, to see the oldest bowling green in the world (1753) and Sun Street's unique 19th century frontages. Overall a most interesting tour - which should be repeated!

With many thanks to Marcus Taylor and to David Smith who arranged the event.



Talk by Jan Nawrocki – 25 November 2021: "How Surgeons think"

Jan definitely proved to be a smooth operator when it came to our first hybrid event! He gave participants, both those present in the Genome Centre seminar room and those joining us via Zoom, an excellent tour de force of the way attitudes of surgeons/medics have influenced modern day medical practice and education.



Jan reached as far back as the ancient Greeks to more recent times to illustrate the range of good and not so good characteristics that come to bear on whether someone will make a good doctor. The talk was interweaved with external determinants such as post-war lessons that came to bear on setting internationally recognised standards of good medical practice.

The talk gave a lot of food for thought, such as the changing dynamics of the patient/surgeon relationship, and prompted some really good discussion. An excellent insight into the practice of modern medicine... and if you ever thought you would have made a good doctor, this talk would most certainly have settled your mind either way. Here are a couple of Jan's less salubrious illustrations!



With thanks to Sara Hinchliffe who organised the event and to David Smith for suggesting this excellent speaker.

Christmas Social Drop-in – 6th December: The Station Bar, Hove

In the absence of the annual Christmas lunch (due to Covid), we decided to embrace the festive season by hosting our first ever social drop-in.

Very informal, with no need to pre-book, we gathered around an area reserved for our use at the Station Bar in Hove, conveniently close to Hove Station.

We were very pleased to meet new and also potential new members and we were having such a jolly time that we forgot to take any photos!

We intend to make this a regular event and alternate them between Hove, Lewes and Brighton. Our next one will be in Lewes – probably over March, so watch out for further details! And remember that you can bring along friends, spouses, partners, and ex-colleagues who haven't yet joined Suss-Ex.



University News

We probably all get news about the University through its various media channels and prick up our ears whenever it gets a mention on national news, so we generally tend to apply our 'overload' filter in determining what to share with you in this Newsletter. However, we thought some of the following were worthy of special mention:

People

New V-C appointed

The appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor has now been announced. She is the world-renowned, interdisciplinary social scientist Professor Sasha Roseneil and will take up her role in August, becoming Sussex's ninth V-C in its 60-year history. Professor Roseneil is currently Pro-Provost (Equity and



Inclusion) and Dean of the Faculty of Social and Historical Sciences at UCL. <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/news/university?id=57215>

MBE for Jayne Aldridge



The University's Director for the Student Experience Jayne Aldridge has been awarded an MBE for services to students in higher education. Jayne was appointed as Sussex's first Director for the Student Experience in 2018 after four years at the Student Services organisation. David Maguire, Interim Vice-Chancellor, stated: "Huge congratulations to Jayne on the award of her MBE, it is incredibly well deserved." You can read more about Jayne and Student Experience at Sussex here:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/newsandevents/?id=57008>

Developments:

Work on new West Slope development

The building of new student housing and facilities on 'West Slope' was approved by B&H City Council in 2020 and the plans have now been given the go-ahead by the University Council. The development will double the amount of student housing on the West Slope – an extra 1,000 rooms. The development will also include: a new health and wellbeing centre; a new, larger supermarket; a new café; additional study space in a new library; and an open area of flexible green space

The area for redevelopment includes Park Village and some of the Park Houses (Kulukundis House, Lancaster House, Kent House and York House). The University will be working in partnership with Balfour Beatty, who will raise the finance to build and operate the project. The new accommodation will become available in several phases over a four-year period.

Work will also begin soon to remove a number of trees from the West Slope development area and five new trees will be planted for every two removed.

Suss-Ex Club: membership benefits

We are very pleased to announce that in discussion with DARO, we have updated the benefits that Suss-Ex members can access. Since 2006 (when the Suss-Ex Club was established), the University has introduced new on-line resources and new ways of sharing University news, so here is a summary of what your Suss-Ex membership now entitles you to:

Membership of the Sussex online Alumni community: membership includes access to the [Alumni Directory](#) to find friends and other former Sussex students, and to **online journals** and the alumni membership for both the **Library** and **SussexSport**. You can register here: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/alumni/community>

JSTOR: an on-line library where subscribers can access more than 50 million digitised pages of scholarly works and research materials <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/alumni/community/jstor>

SAGE Journals: free access to scholarly journals and material previously only available to staff and current students of the University. <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/alumni/community/sage-journals>

SussexSport: special discounted rates are available for annual and three-monthly memberships - <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sport/public/memberships>

Library: a range of membership options are available with discounted rates for ex-staff/alumni. See: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/visitors>

Alumni News online: receive regular updates about the University and its community <https://alumni.sussex.ac.uk/sussex-news>

Falmer Magazine: produced annually with a great round-up of University events and strategy, plus excellent features on University people including alumni. This is available online to download from here: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/alumni/falmer-magazine/about>

(For members who prefer to receive a hard copy, you need to be registered on the DARO Suss-Ex Club membership list and provide your home address – information about how to do this is provided below).*

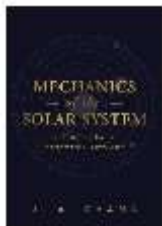
Sussex Centre for Language Studies: members can benefit from a concession for the Open Courses in Modern Languages - <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/ml/opencourses>

To access all these benefits, register online here: <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/alumni/community>.

* To receive a hard copy of Falmer Magazine AND emails about Suss-Ex Club events, simply email your name and home address to: C.M.Goldie@sussex.ac.uk (Charles is on the Suss-Ex steering group and maintains the membership list with DARO).

Who has been publishing?

Following calls in previous Newsletters, we're happy to give details of the following publications by retired members. Such evidence of activity helps confirm the continuing importance to the University of its retired members. [Charles Goldie](#) aims to publish further lists on an annual basis and is happy to receive contributions at any time.



Tony Evans

Mechanics of The Solar System: An Introduction to Mathematical Astronomy (Brown Dog Books, 2021), ISBN13: 978-1839522345.

Fred Gray

The Architecture of British Seaside Piers (Crowood, 2020), ISBN13: 978-1-78500-713-2.
"Oh, I do like to be beside the seaside ...", *The Architectural Historian* **12**(May 2021), 32–33.



Mike Hutchings

Mike's publications since retirement begin with

Roiloa, S. R. & Hutchings, M. J. (2012), "The effects of rooting frequency and position of rooted ramets on plasticity and yield in clonal fragments of *Glechoma hederacea*". *Evolutionary Ecology* **27**(2012), 145–152.

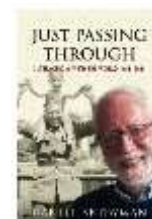
Meekers, T., Hutchings, M. J., Honnay, O. & Jacquemyn, H. (2012), "Biological Flora of the British Isles: *Gymnadenia conopsea* s. l.". *Journal of Ecology* **100**(2012), 1269–1288.

*The full list of 18 papers is [here](#). The photo is of *Gymnadenia conopsea* (Wikimedia Commons).*

Daniel Snowman

Just Passing Through: Interactions with the World 1938–2021 (Brown Dog Books, 2021), ISBN13: 978-1839522864.

Under the heading "Book 5, University of Sussex, 1963–67: 'A New Map of Learning'" Daniel has 6 chapters, beginning with "24: Balliol-by-the-Sea".



Peter Townsend

The Dark Side of Technology (Oxford University Press, 2016), ISBN13: 9-780198-790532.

The Evolution of Music through Culture and Science (Oxford University Press, 2020), ISBN13: 9-780198-848400.

The Power of Imperfections: a Key to Technology, Love, Life and Survival (Oxford University Press, 2022), ISBN13: 978-0-19-285747-7.

Do you have a publication or publications that you would like to see featured in our next Newsletter? Send details/links to Charles Goldie: C.M.Goldie@sussex.ac.uk

OBITUARIES

In this edition we note with regret the loss of a number of ex-colleagues. Please let us know if there is anyone we've missed.

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](#). The obituaries below are presented as links. However, those commissioned for this Newsletter are appended to the PDF version.



Jonathan Bacon, Neuroscientist, died 5th November 2021, aged 71.

Staff Bulletin (This is Sussex) [12th November 2021](#), [19th November 2021](#)

A memorial event for Jonathan is planned for Friday 8th April.

Dorothy Evans, Nurse, died 21st May 2011, aged 76.

Tony Evans, Physicist and Astronomer, died 12th August 2021, aged 85.
[Suss-Ex Club \(joint obituary of Dorothy and Tony, commissioned for this Newsletter\)](#)



Ladislaus (Laci) Löb, Professor of German, died 2nd October 2021, aged 88.

[Suss-Ex Club \(obituary commissioned for this Newsletter\)](#), [Bulletin \(This is Sussex\) 22nd October 2021](#)

Mike Owen, Engineer, died 25th December 2021, aged 83.

[Suss-Ex Club \(obituary commissioned for this Newsletter\)](#), [Bulletin \(This is Sussex\) 14th January 2022](#)



Derek Robinson, Statistician, died 25th July 2021, aged 74.

[Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, Series A: Statistics in Society, 2022 \(to appear\)](#)

George Sim, Crystallographer, died 2012, aged 82/83.

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



Who are we?

Patron: Sir Gordon Conway

Founded in 2006 with the support of our patron (and also our founding Chair), 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:

Rossana Dowsett Rossana.Dowsett@ntlworld.com

Colin Finn colinfinn@btinternet.com

Jackie Fuller jkfuller21@hotmail.com Treasurer

Charles Goldie c.m.goldie@sussex.ac.uk Secretary

Sara Hinchliffe sarajanehinchliffe@gmail.com

Steve Pavey miniperson2003@yahoo.co.uk

Paul Tofts uos@paul-tofts.org.uk, Chair

Helen Walker helenjwalker@btinternet.com

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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/>



James Anthony Evans, 7th March 1936 – 12th August 2021

Dorothy Grace Evans, née Garland, 30th September 1935 – 21st May 2011



Tony and Dorothy in late 1984, when they were both working at the University

Tony, as James Anthony was always known, was born in Croydon and raised with his younger sister. His parents, originally from Liverpool, moved regularly throughout their lives, and Tony spent his childhood in London and Manchester. He went to Birmingham University, taking a BSc in mathematical physics in 1957 and staying on for a PhD in theoretical nuclear physics, which he gained in 1960 with a thesis entitled *Vibrational States in Light Nuclei*.

Tony then worked on research projects at the Universities of Minnesota (USA) and Copenhagen (Denmark). In April 1961, while in Minnesota, he met Dorothy, a nurse from Argentina. During their courtship, she taught him to speak Spanish. They married in Copenhagen on 5th May 1962. After a further research post for Tony at the University of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), they settled in 1963 in Argentina, where Tony had been appointed Professor of Physics at the Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires. Dorothy returned to work at The British Hospital.

Following a brutal military attack on staff and students (The Night of the Long Batons) in 1966, they decided that it would be safer to raise their family in England (by then, they had two children with a third on the way). Of the posts that Tony was offered he chose Sussex, starting in January 1967. The family made their journey by boat, settling in Peacehaven.

During the early 1970s, he took an 18-month sabbatical to return to a now more politically stable Argentina. Dorothy set off first for the long boat trip, with their four children and supported by a family friend who was travelling to take up an au-pair post. Tony flew out to join them once term had finished and he had secured tenants for the family home. This was an idyllic time for the family, living in a house that adjoined the home of Dorothy's parents and other family members living locally. Tony returned to work at the University while the children attended local nurseries and schools.

When it was time to return, Dorothy and Tony planned the most interesting trip that they could afford, beginning with a flight over the Andes to Chile, where they boarded a ship. The voyage took them up the west coast of South America and through the Panama Canal before crossing the Atlantic to Lisbon. From there they made several stops in the Mediterranean before disembarking in Naples. They then toured Italy before returning to England by train, taking a

detour to Zagreb (visiting the Best Man from their wedding). All this was achieved without losing a single piece of luggage.

On returning to Sussex, Dorothy started to work at the University in the Health Centre. For the children, it meant that much of the school holidays were spent exploring the beautiful campus and playing with the children who lived there.

During his years at Sussex, Tony worked closely with his colleague J. P. (Phil) Elliott. He published at least 37 refereed papers, which attracted 691 citations. He often made academic visits abroad, his children remembering his trips to Scotland, Sweden, Greece, Poland, Lebanon and back to Argentina. From 1980 to 2000 he worked as a part-time course tutor in Physics for the Open University, helping to redesign their course, and he also taught A-Level Mathematics at Lewes Prison. Tony was a member of the Institute of Physics, the Royal Astronomical Society and the British Astronomical Association.

In September 1989 Tony suffered his first heart attack. He was on the campus at the time, and his recovery was aided by the prompt and excellent care he was given by the Health Centre staff before going to hospital. Within a year, Dorothy retired on health grounds when it became clear that her forgetfulness was something more serious. She was eventually diagnosed with Alzheimer's Syndrome. Tony chose to be her primary care giver until her death.

In his early years of retirement, as well as caring for Dorothy Tony continued work in nuclear physics, attending lectures put on by his scientific societies when he could. He took advanced Spanish, and learned to play Bridge, meeting former colleagues to play. He was Treasurer for the local Alzheimer's Society group, one of many charities that he continued to support for the rest of his life. During this time, his father became unable to care for himself so left Liverpool to live with Tony and Dorothy.

Later, when Tony was able to get out more, he enjoyed visiting London. He would go to lectures, museums, concerts, art galleries and the theatre. There were always eager companions in his children, grandchildren and sister. He was an avid reader and had loved steam trains since childhood. Another great passion was football. Like his father, he was a lifelong Liverpool fan.

He was a keen amateur astronomer. From 2004 he contributed annual ephemerides for three planets to the British Astronomical Association for publication in its handbook. During the first Covid lockdown, despite failing vision, he worked on putting his expertise into a book. He was thrilled when *Mechanics of The Solar System: An Introduction to Mathematical Astronomy* (Brown Dog Books) was published in early 2021. He dedicated the book to Dorothy.

Tony died unexpectedly on 12th August. Tony and Dorothy are survived by their children Anahi, Jim, Ariane and Daniel, and by twelve grandchildren and two great-grandsons. Their family plan to scatter the combined ashes of Dorothy and Tony in May, on what would have been their 60th anniversary.

Obituary assembled by Charles Goldie from contributions of Tony's colleague Robert Smith, of Tony himself, and of Tony and Dorothy's children.



Ladislaus Løb

Nicolas Tredell, Jim McGivney, Laci Løb, Rosemary Leech, Alistair Davies at the conclusion of the International Summer School 2005, directed by Laci.

Ladislaus (Laci) Løb, the last but one Professor of German at Sussex University, died in Zürich, Switzerland, on 2nd October 2021 from complications after a fall. Laci had reached a venerable age but when he celebrated his 88th birthday on 8th May this year he was, characteristically, working on another major translation—and he remained mentally alert and actively polyglot to the end; on the day before he died he was speaking in Italian to his grandson who had come to see him from Padua, where he is studying. A distinguished scholar of the literature of the German Enlightenment, particularly its drama, and an accomplished translator from Hungarian and German, Laci also wrote invaluable first-hand accounts of the Nazi extermination of Romanian and Hungarian Jewry and of the “luck” of his own survival. As he put it himself:

If “luck” is a relative concept I can call myself lucky. I lost the majority of my family in the Holocaust. I was persecuted in antisemitic Hungary. I spent five months in Bergen-Belsen as a child of 11, but I was spared Auschwitz and granted asylum in Switzerland while Nazi Germany was still trying to win the war it had started.

Laci was born in 1933 into a Hungarian-speaking middle-class Jewish family in a *shtetl* (small town) near Cluj (Kolozsvár) in Transylvania in Romania. In 1944, at the age of eleven, he was deported, along with his father (his mother had died from tuberculosis in 1942), to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, then freed after five months with some 320 others as a result of a controversial deal with Adolf Eichmann brokered by Rezső Kasztner, who was, in Laci’s words, “a Zionist activist” and “the leader of an illegal ‘Relief and Rescue Committee’, formed to save Jews from the Nazis”. Laci’s book *Dealing with Satan* (2008), which he was unable to write until his seventies, offers a harrowing account of his experiences at that time, drawing on the testimony of other survivors as well as his own, and provides a well-researched and balanced defence of Kasztner, who was later assassinated and who remains an incendiary figure in some quarters. The book won the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Award in 2012. One of Laci’s adult fellow prisoners in Bergen-Belsen was Béla Zsolt, whose powerful memoir, *Kilenc koffer* [*Nine Suitcases*], he would later be the first to translate from Hungarian into English.

After his release, Laci was, with his father, granted asylum in Switzerland and resumed his formal education, eventually obtaining a Doctorate in Philosophy at the University of Zürich for a thesis on J. B. Priestley (he enjoyed quoting F. R. Leavis’s mordant remark in *The Great Tradition* that life was not long enough to permit of one’s giving any time to Mr Priestley). In 1963, after a brief career as a teacher and journalist in Switzerland, he came to England to teach German literature and language at the University of Sussex (his recollections of the fluid and innovative early years of the university’s history were fascinating), and he enjoyed a long and successful career there until his retirement. Talking with Laci, on and off campus, gave the liberating sense of moving between and across cultures and languages—he spoke Hungarian, German, English, French and Italian. He sometimes likened himself to “Here Comes Everybody” (HCE, aka H. C.

Earwicker) in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*.

Laci summed up his movements between nationalities in this way: **“Having been a Romanian and Hungarian citizen, I am now Swiss and British by naturalisation”**. In 2017, he returned with his wife Sheila to the country that had given him refuge after Bergen-Belsen and finished an English translation—another first—of Kurt Guggenheim's *Alles in Allem*. Laci described this as “a vast panoramic novel set in Zürich from 1900 to 1950” which evokes the transformation of “a rural community into a dynamic modern city”. This translation is both a gift to his English-language readers and to his compatriots in Zürich who had made his long and rich career possible. He will be remembered for his remarkable learning, his warmth, his courtesy, his kindness and his very dry wit by colleagues and students at Sussex and by the many participants, drawn from across the globe, in the Sussex Summer School of which he was Director for several decades before and after his retirement. His was an extraordinary life and he was an extraordinary man.

Alistair Davies and Nicolas Tredell
22nd October 2021

Sources

Löb, Ladislaus, “Ladislaus Löb”, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, [Holocaust Memorial Day Trust | Ladislaus Löb \(hmd.org.uk\)](https://www.hmd.org.uk/).

_____. “Synopsis: Kurt Guggenheim, *Alles in Allem*”, unpublished.

Davies, Alistair, photo at International Summer School 2005.

John Michael Owen, 23rd July 1938 – 25th December 2021



Mike Owen in 1977

John ‘Mike’ Owen, Emeritus Professor of Aerospace Engineering at the University of Bath, died on 25th December, aged 83, from the type of lung cancer caused by asbestos.

Born in South London, he started a sea-going student apprenticeship in marine engineering at the age of 16 and followed this by service with the Esso company on steam-turbine tankers. After reaching the senior watch-keeping position of second engineer, Mike realised he was more academically inclined and he entered King’s College Newcastle in 1961 to read Mechanical Engineering. King’s College was at that time the science campus of the federal University of Durham, becoming the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in 1963. In 1965, after taking the more difficult mathematical options, Mike graduated with Class 1 honours, taking a Durham degree.

In 1965, he was appointed research engineer in fluid machinery in Vancouver but a year later was invited to join Fred Bayley’s research team at the newly established University of Sussex to work on a project funded by Rolls-Royce on the fluid mechanics of rotating discs, a subject that occupied the rest of his life, graduating with a DPhil in 1969 and later a DSc. He was described by Rolls-Royce as an intellectual heavyweight and was appointed Research Fellow, Lecturer and Reader in quick succession.

Over his 20 years at Sussex he supervised many research students, grants and contracts, and became the Director of the Thermo-Fluid Mechanics Research Centre, which he and Fred Bayley founded with a grant from the then Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC, later to become EPSRC). His research work was funded by SERC, the MoD, and by a number of international gas turbine companies including Rolls-Royce, GEC, Sulzer, Siemens and MTU. Mike Owen merited a chair before the age of 40 but strange academic politics intervened, and he took the Chair of Mechanical Engineering at Bath in 1989.

During his time at Sussex and Bath, Mike produced over a hundred high-quality journal and conference papers, and several books, two of which, with the late Ruth Rogers, entitled *Flow and Heat Transfer in Rotating Disc Systems* established him as a world authority on rotating flows. He favoured integral methods rather than the sledgehammer approach of Computational Fluid Dynamics, arguing that this method was more economical and gave greater insight. He continued this experimental and theoretical work at Bath, developing the now world-renowned centre for rotating flows and researching the three key areas for rotating flows in jet engines: pre-swirl, ingress and buoyancy. He held several academic posts at Bath, including Head of School as it transitioned to a Department within the faculty of Engineering.

Once asked when he was going to retire, he replied 'never' and indeed he was working on two scientific papers right up to his last few days. Prior to the cancer, he was very fit and strong, cycling up and down the hills around Bath and walking miles at weekends. He had a real sense of humour, liked funny stories and, in common with most engineers, enjoyed jokes with an unexpected twist. Mike was well read and often brightened engineering design meetings with a literary quotation. He was an excellent mentor, generously giving his time to PhD students and junior academics. He was happily married for 57 years and is survived by his wife Doreen, two daughters and seven grandchildren.

Alan Turner

George Andrew Sim (1929 – 2012)



George Sim was a pioneer of modern chemical crystallography and the deviser of the Sim-weighted electron density synthesis, familiar to SHELX users as FMAP 5.

He was born in Aberdeen and began his long association with the Chemistry Department of the University of Glasgow in 1948. After taking an expected First, he joined J.M. Robertson's X-ray diffraction group in 1952 and soon convinced his supervisor that he was "a research worker of outstanding brilliance and originality."

He then moved to Cochran's group at the Cavendish Laboratory to work on theoretical aspects of the heavy atom method, and did his national service with the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston before returning to Glasgow as ICI research fellow. He was appointed as lecturer in 1957 and after a few years at the University of Illinois came to Sussex 1966. He left in 1970 to succeed Robertson in the Gardiner Chair of Chemistry.

During his years at Sussex he published about 80 papers in international journals. He received a substantial grant from the EPSRC to set up the Sussex crystallography service, which went on, under the direction of Peter Hitchcock, to elucidate many hundreds of structures of small molecules. His collaborators included M.A. Bush, G.M. McLaughlen, M.G. Waite and D.N.J. White. He was awarded the Corday-Morgan Medal and Prize of the Royal Society of Chemistry for 1963 and, in 1967, the Fritzche Prize of the American Chemical Society that recognises outstanding achievements in the analysis, structure elucidation and chemical synthesis of natural products [Other Sussex recipients were J W Cornforth (1969) and Ian Scott (1976)]. His work on the alkaloidal tumour inhibitor camptothecin was noted by the ACS as a 'landmark in Chemical History'.

Crystallographers always have long publication lists because they receive crystals as gifts from other research groups; their vital evidence often confirms what has already be deduced by much less certain procedures. George collaborated with colleagues at the Universities of Illinois, Glasgow and Basle to produce long series of papers on sesquiterpenoid tumour inhibitors and other natural products, and with George Knox and others at Strathclyde to write a series on metal carbonyl and nitrosyl complexes. At Sussex he began collaborations with Joseph Chatt and Ray Richards on carbene complexes of platinum, with Jim Hanson on natural products, and with David Smith on the structures of amido- and imidoaluminium derivatives. With the computer power universally available today, crystal structures of small molecules can be routinely solved in an hour or two, so researchers sometimes now turn to crystallography as a first rather than as a final technique for the characterisation of a new compound. In the late 1960s the situation was very different; data were collected photographically on packs of Weissenberg photographs. The shades of grey in the photographs were analysed patiently by comparison with spots of known relative intensity.

Computers were slow and the programs that ran on them were primitive by modern standards. DEUCE which was used for most of Sim's work at this time took 8–12 hours for a three-dimensional Fourier calculation and the scale factor had to be punched onto a Hollerith card in Chinese binary. The calculated electron density values were written by hand onto a correctly scaled grid, contour lines drawn and the contours transferred to glass sheets. George's ability to filter the correct structure from the noise in a poorly phased map was legendary. Once, when the computer had broken down in the middle of the calculation, he solved a structure with only half the map available.

It was particularly difficult to solve the structures of organic molecules that contained no heavy element. In one case at Sussex [(MeAlNMe)₇] George had to put aside a data set on which he was making little progress until the so-called 'direct methods' which he was developing as a crystallographer made a solution possible a year or two later.

As well as working on his research, George taught the basic course in thermodynamics to all the undergraduates in the School of Molecular Science.

George remained at Glasgow till he retired in 1990. He actively pursued a variety of structural themes: natural product chemistry, conformational studies of nine-, ten- and eleven-membered rings, the stereochemistry of mercury complexes and of metal-carbonyl and -nitrosyl complexes. He also put much effort into the six volumes of the Chemical Society Specialist Periodical Reports on *Molecular Structure by Diffraction Methods*, which he co-edited with L.E. Sutton, and his co-editorship of *Acta Crystallographica*. He was a founder member and active supporter of the British Crystallographic Association and he became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

He never lost his love for experimental crystallography. He was not the kind of professor who worked exclusively through the hands of others. Throughout his career he was frequently to be found in the X-ray laboratory, abstractedly humming some favourite classical theme as he worked on a crystal. Shortly before he retired he began to follow order-disorder transitions by studying the effect of changing temperature on crystal structure. Typically, in a paper on nitrogen inversion in a 1,3,5-triazacyclohexane from structure analyses at 127, 250, 268 and 293 K, he did all the experimental and computational work himself.

One of us (KM) worked as a crystallographer in his department for many years. George was as one would wish a senior colleague to be; he took the trouble to read one's work, he was always supportive and offered valid comment discreetly. He was equally critical of his own work which he always assessed very soberly.

Two years before his death George suffered a stroke from which he did not fully recover. He is survived by his wife Margaret and by his children Kenneth and Linda.

Ken Muir and David Smith

A longer obituary by KM has been published in *Crystallography Today* **124**(2013).