

# THE SUSS-EX CLUB

## NEWSLETTER NO. 6, October 2007

### WELCOME

- to the Suss-Ex Newsletter. The Suss-Ex club has been going for a year now; it has held a number of successful activities, and more are planned – see below. (If you are a new member, you may like to look at the website at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/suss-ex/> to learn more about what has been going on. It's also worth a glance from time to time by any existing members who would like to keep up with what is going on) For the time being the club is still being run by an informal steering group, chaired by former VC Sir Gordon Conway; its full membership is shown on the web site.

### JOIN THE STEERING GROUP?

The Steering Group, which meets once a term, would be happy to have a few more members, especially from categories not well represented yet; volunteers are invited to give their names to Gill Blake in the Development and Alumni Relations Office ([g.blake@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:g.blake@sussex.ac.uk)). It is hoped that a more formally democratic structure may soon be established.

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### CHRISTMAS PARTY

We are pleased to announce that the Suss-Ex Club, in conjunction with USPAS, will be holding a Christmas Party again this year, open to all former staff and their partners. We hope for another jovial seasonal reunion. This time, however, it will be slightly differently organised, at lunchtime rather than in the evening. The party will be on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December, from 12.30 – 2.30 pm, in the Meeting House Quiet Room. Numbers have to be limited to what the room will officially hold, so we cannot promise that there will be room for everyone who wants to come.

Notional tickets, therefore, have to be issued and, since we are charged for the use of the room, and have to cover the costs of food and drink, in the absence of any general club funds we have to charge Suss-Ex members for them. Please apply **by Nov. 30** at latest, so that we can know the numbers in good time. An application form is given on the final page of this newsletter.

The party will need helpers to get the food and drink and take it to campus, to set things up, and to clear up afterwards. Volunteers to give any form of help will be warmly appreciated. Please let Jennifer Platt ([j.platt@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:j.platt@sussex.ac.uk)) know if you can help.

## **OTHER FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES**

### ***The Heiress* at Brighton Little Theatre ... 7.45 p.m., Wednesday 12 December**

This play, by Ruth and Augustus Goetz, is adapted from 'Washington Square' by Henry James. The theatre's blurb says 'Set in late nineteenth-century New York, *The Heiress* shows Henry James at his best and the sometimes misguided, but mainly well-intentioned, actions of his characters make this a gripping and emotional drama.'

Brighton Little Theatre is at the bottom of Clarence Gardens, which is off the south side of Western Road, Brighton, just west of Churchill Square (a Bradford & Bingley branch is on one corner, and a Coffee Republic on the other). To reach the theatre, go down the twitten past the Pull and Pump pub.

Tickets are £7.50 each.

If you would like to join a Suss-Ex group on 12 December please let me know in writing by 10 November how many tickets you would like, enclosing a cheque, payable to Brighton Little Theatre, for the appropriate amount. (I have already reserved a block of seats for us, and should be able to book more if there is sufficient interest.) If you would like me to send your tickets to you, please enclose SAE; otherwise I will be at the theatre by 7.30 and you can collect them then.

To facilitate possible joint travel and/or pre-theatre dining, I will send everyone concerned a list of participants, but will leave any arrangements to be made directly between members; if you do not wish to be included in such a list please indicate that when booking with me.

Adrian Peasgood  
14 Harrington Villas, Brighton BN1 6RG  
01273 508620  
[adrian@peasgood.plus.com](mailto:adrian@peasgood.plus.com)

### **Possible Theatre Royal trips**

Would anyone be interested in ballet or opera performances by the companies which sometimes come to the Theatre Royal? If so, please let Jennifer Platt ([j.platt@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:j.platt@sussex.ac.uk)) know, and we will see what can be done.

### **Stop press!**

We have just heard that the former Sports Centre Director, Jan Thole, has kindly agreed to be our speaker at a meeting of Life After Sussex. Jan will talk informally on her post-Sussex career, including her role in Eastenders, on Friday January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008. More details to follow.

## STUDENT MEMORIES OF THE 1960s



*Helen and Sheila*

Nearly four hundred alumni who were at Sussex in the 1960s returned to campus on September 15 to join in the University's 40th anniversary celebrations. The invitation came from Catherine Boyd and Helen Pennant-Rea, better remembered as the Jay Twins, who kindly championed the event. Many former tutors were there to mark the occasion and to everyone's delight Lord Asa Briggs and his wife, Lady Briggs, were the guests of honour. Lord Briggs spoke movingly about those first few years at Sussex and about how the University, with its innovative interdisciplinary approach to teaching and research, pioneered a new 'map of learning'. His speech was followed with a few words from the new Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Farthing, who hosted the reunion.

The day focussed on those who had been at Sussex from 1961 to 1967, as students or as tutors, and there was the opportunity to document memories either by writing them down or recording them on the day. As a graduate of the MA in Life History I had experience as an oral historian and was asked to digitally record some of the many recollections, to build a portrait of university life then. What follows is a brief reflection.

It was a fresh brilliantly blue day: the best kind of day to visit the University of Sussex with its red brick, green verges and white concrete arches. Falmer House filled up fast. Soon there were many clusters of people chatting about the past. I wondered what they were talking about so vividly, and what had provoked the journey back, questions that were answered during the recorded interviews. Each story was unique, but several themes recurrent.

Mo and Bob spoke about the "revolutionary health centre" which provided contraceptive advice. The sexual liberation of the time however, was largely exaggerated it seems; many were in monogamous relationships, some going on to marry people they met at Sussex. Other life-long friends, like Helen and Sheila, spoke about learning to cook and entertain together: "we had boys but no alcohol". Helen remembered the donut protest: "we were really militant ... they put the price up, and we all went on some bizarre strike." 1960s politics came across strongly: if you arrived without a political framework, you certainly left with one. Ian described Sussex as "liberated and liberating" and how he felt "so welcome, encouraged, so free." Many reported how wonderful it felt to be back.

As often happens in collective oral histories, a question posed by one individual is often answered in the testimony of another. Kath was curious. Being pretty sure there was a Henry Moore statue in the grounds, she wondered what had happened to it? In a later interview Bob confirms there was indeed such a statue: "My greatest memory," he says, "is that final summer ball in the summer of '68 when we had the Henry Moore sculptures in the grounds and around 4 in the morning the sun came up through the windows in Falmer House." Only one small anecdote amongst the many recorded.

I gathered 12 interviews and together they make up a small collective portrait of University life at Sussex during the 1960s. I haven't been able to mention all involved here, or indeed the guesthouses with over-zealous landladies, the Hendrix gig, or the 'red paint incident'. It is hoped however, that these interviews, which are now kept in the Special Collections of the Library, could form the basis of a much larger life history project about Sussex University in and beyond the 1960s.

### **Donna Hetherington**

DPhil History research student.

## **OBITUARIES**

Sadly, a number of long-standing recent or former colleagues have died recently; they include Richard Lewis, Stephen Medcalf, David Osmond-Smith, Timothy Sprigge and David Wall. For some of these there have been excellent obituaries in the newspapers, with many splendid anecdotes. Those so far identified are listed below, and can be found online:

Stephen Medcalf	Independent, Sep. 28 Times, Oct 3 Telegraph, Oct 5 Guardian Oct. 18.
Timothy Sprigge	Scotsman, July 24, Sep. 14 Guardian, Sep. 4 Times, Sep. 6 Telegraph, Sep. 19
David Osmond-Smith	Guardian, June 22 Times, June 27 Independent, Sep. 28

Colleagues may also like to know that there is a glowing obituary notice for David's role in relation to Glyndebourne in the programme for the Glyndebourne Touring season.

## **CHRISTMAS PARTY APPLICATION**

I/we would like to attend the lunchtime Christmas party on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> December.

Tickets are £5 per single person, £8 for a couple; please send a cheque, made out to the University of Sussex.

I would like ..... ticket(s) at a total cost of £.....

**NAME:**.....

**ADDRESS:**.....

.....

**Email:**.....

**Telephone:**.....

Please return this form **by 30<sup>th</sup> November** to:

Development and Alumni Relations Office  
Bramber House  
University of Sussex  
Brighton BN1 9QU