

THE SUSS-EX CLUB

NEWSLETTER NO. 7, April 2008

WELCOME

- to the Spring Suss-Ex Newsletter. The Suss-Ex club has held a number of successful activities over the last few months, and more are planned – see below. You can also find the latest activities on the website at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/suss-ex/>

To save costs it would help enormously to send communications such as this to everyone by e-mail. If you are currently receiving this newsletter by post but have an e-mail address, please do let us know. You can send your details to alumninews@sussex.ac.uk.

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THEATRE TRIP REVIEWS

1. THE HEIRESS

On 12 December 2007, a party of nine Suss-Ex members went to the Brighton Little Theatre to see "The Heiress". It was the first time that at least two of the party had been to this cosy venue, even after living in Brighton for a very long time. The performance was well-acted and stimulating, though the Henry James storyline is rather bleak. The very short interval left little time for socializing, but fortunately most of us attended the Suss-Ex lunch two days later, where there was plenty of time to talk. I hope the event will be repeated; if so the option of a pre-performance meal would be a good idea.

Richard Jackson

2. UNCLE VANYA

Dorothy and Arnold Goldman discuss seeing *Uncle Vanya* in Brighton with other Suss Exes

Jennifer Platt organised two Suss Ex parties to the Theatre Royal in Brighton to see Peter Hall's production of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. Thursday evening began – and the Saturday matinee ended – with a meal at Carluccio's, only betterable by a Russian restaurant. Drown your sorrows, anyone? At least drink to Jennifer: Za vas!

Arnold: The set was an interesting mixture of outdoors and indoors, serving at once as garden, dining room, drawing room and bedroom/office. You didn't need to think you were changing scenes, though they moved items about a bit.

Dorothy: The single dead tree rather gave the game away. So much for Astroff's grand ecological plans. But like all the others, progress for him was never going to be made by him or in his generation.

A: The tree did look like something out of Beckett. I rather expected that its leaves would have fallen after the interval. Perhaps it was a red maple. Otherwise, I rather felt that Astrov (Neil Pearson) would do something in the Johnny Appleseed line, though I have to admit that argument was that everything was going to the dogs. The cast showed nice ensemble playing. Perhaps Nicholas Le Prevost's Vanya stood out as played for comedy, but it seemed part of his character. True, Faith Brook as the old mother had no real contact with the others, but I suppose that was essentially true of all the characters, that they were each alone with themselves.

D: I wanted to tell them all to get a grip. That summer was an episode of madness; Serebriakov – a heavily disguised Ronald Pickup – and Yelena's visit turned everything upside down and everyone became involved in "actions" which were uniformly frustrated, sometimes by themselves, before everything died away into the *status quo ante bellum*.

A: Only everyone then realised what they were perhaps ignorant of before, how awful, how false their positions were.

D: Not knowing the play, I thought the title was interesting in throwing an emphasis on young Sonia – Vanya is *her* uncle, no one else's.

A: I felt sympathy with Sonia's curtain speech – "We must go on living.... We shall have no rest... We shall die submissively... We shall hear the angels.... I believe it.... We shall rest!" It could have been maudlin, but it wasn't. I reached for my handkerchief.

D: You always do that.

FORTHCOMING THEATRE TRIPS

SUMMER THEATRE TRIP(S)

Here are the latest suggestions for next Suss-Ex theatre trip(s). Once again there seem to be a number of quite different possibilities:

- May 29-31

The Russian State Opera of Siberia perform Madam Butterfly (Thurs), La Traviata (Fri), and La Bohème (Sat. matinee and evening). Your guess is as good as mine on the quality of this company and its productions; I have not found any reviews of it.
Stalls seats £28.

- June 9-14

Anthony Shaffer's Sleuth, starring Simon MacCorkindale and Michael Praed.
'Surely the most fiendishly clever thriller ever written for the stage' [Times]
Stalls seats £21 (matinees £15).

- September 4-13

Michael Frayn's Noises Off.

'At an earlier performance I laughed so much in the first act that by the second I was almost too weak to laugh any more'. [J. Platt]

[You may feel it's early to commit yourself for this one, but I suspect that it will sell out fast.]

Stalls seats £21 (matinees £15).

We can, as usual, get a group reduction on the price of tickets for most performances if at least ten people want to go, and it is those prices which are quoted above. **A booking needs to be made promptly to ensure that tickets are available**, and your money then has to be sent in time for the total bill to be paid about a month in advance. If people are interested, dinner together beforehand, or after a matinee, can be booked. Carluccio's has generally been quite successful in the past, but other recommendations would be welcome.

If you are interested in one or more of these possibilities, please let me know **by April 16** (preferably by e mail – fastest - to j.platt@sussex.ac.uk, or phone 01273 555025, or post to Arts D or 98 Beaconsfield Villas, Brighton BN1 6HE). If possible please use the slip below*: just mark all days/times which would be OK, number those when you are free in order of preference, and indicate the number of tickets wanted.

When I have the replies, I will make a booking for the time most preferred, ask those who are coming to send a cheque, and give you details of the practical arrangements. (Send no money until you hear from me.) I will also notify any whose times could not be covered. Of course if it does not work out so that any booking can be made I will also inform those affected.

I have discovered that backstage tours, lasting about an hour, are available by arrangement for £5.50 per head, and could in principle be arranged to fit in with a performance that we are attending. I am informed that there would not be too many stairs or other physical hazards. A tour could of course be taken without going to the play! If you would be interested, please write that in somewhere.

Jennifer Platt

* Some people have said that they have difficulty with using the form by e mail. What I do is to copy forms to a Word file, fill them in there, then attach the file to my reply (easier for the recipient than copying it into the message)

RESPONSE FORM OVERLEAF

THEATRE TRIP RESPONSE FORM

Please let Jennifer Platt know **by April 16** (preferably by e mail – fastest - to j.platt@sussex.ac.uk, or phone 01273 555025, or post to Arts D or 98 Beaconsfield Villas, Brighton BN1 6HE). Just mark all days/times which would be OK, number those when you are free in order of preference, and indicate the number of tickets wanted.

<u>Opera</u>	<u>Butterfly</u> Thurs May 29, 7.30	<u>Traviata</u> Fri. May 27, 7.30	<u>Bohème</u> Sat. May 31, 2.30	<u>Bohème</u> Sat. May 31, 7.30
Date & time OK?				
Preference?				
How many?				
Dinner?				

<u>Sleuth</u>	Mon. June 9, 7.45	Tues. June 10, 7.45	Weds. June 11, 7.45	Thurs. June 12, 2.30	Thurs. June 12, 7.45
Date & time OK?					
Preference?					
How many?					
Dinner?					

<u>Noises Off</u>	Thurs Sep 4, 2.30	Thurs Sep. 4, 7.45	Mon. Sep. 8, 7.45	Tues. Sep. 9, 7.45	Weds. Sep 10, 7.45	Thurs Sep. 11, 2.30	Thurs. Sep 11, 7.45
Date & time OK?							
Preference?							
How many?							
Dinner?							

Name.....

Address.....

E mail, telephone.....

SUMMER EVENTS

1. Sunday June 1st Nature Walk

Following last year's successful Ashdown Forest Walk with David Streeter, another Walk with David is planned. The location is to be confirmed, however please register your interest with:

Ken Wheeler

22 Cranedown
Lewes
BN7 3NA

01273 478 426
K.P.Wheeler@sussex.ac.uk

2. Wednesday 4th June 2008, 2.30-5.30pm Special Guided tour of Farley Farm House, Chiddingly – the home of Roland Penrose and Lee Miller

Roland Penrose was the biographer of Pablo Picasso, Joan Miro, Man Ray and Antoni Tapies. He was a Surrealist artist himself and close friend of Max Ernst, Paul Eluard and others in the movement and in 1936 organised the International Surrealist Exhibition in London. In 1947, with Herbert Read, he founded London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. In 1966 he was knighted for his service to the visual arts. His last exhibition of new work opened a few days after he died in 1984.

Lee Miller's career began as a model for Vogue and Vanity Fair, before meeting Man Ray in Paris in 1929. She became his lover and muse and, inspired by his work, went on to become a great photographer herself. She worked as a front line war correspondent during the Second World War and was the only woman in combat photojournalism in Europe; she recorded some of the most momentous events in the 20th century, including the fall of Hitler and the liberation of the concentration camps. A major retrospective of her work celebrating the centenary of her birth has been running at the V&A from September 2007 to January 2008.

Roland and Lee moved to Farley Farm in 1949 with their young son Antony and the main rooms are largely as they were when they lived there, with their furnishings and collections, although major paintings from Roland's collection are now in national galleries. Farley also houses the Lee Miller Archive, with some of her work on view.

An introductory talk and our extended guided tour will be led by Antony Penrose and his daughter Ami Bouhassane, who give a fascinating and unique insight into their family home and the artists, writers, poets and curators who visited over a period of 35 years (many of whom were photographed by Lee at the house and in the village).

- Tours are by appointment only, for a maximum of 15 people and this date has been pre-booked exclusively for Suss-Ex members.
- The cost of the tour (including refreshments) is £25 per person. If you would like to join the group please send your details, including email address and a cheque made out to S. Bullock. I will confirm all bookings immediately and follow with other details nearer the date.
- The tour lasts approximately three hours. There will be an opportunity to visit the bookshop and garden, which was designed by Roland Penrose, after the tour.

- The house is at Muddles Green off the A22 between Uckfield and Hailsham, between Golden Cross and Gun Hill. Off-road parking is available.
- There is no public transport to the house. The closest station is Lewes and from there a taxi to Farley will take approximately 20 minutes.
- It might be possible to arrange lifts if car drivers would let me know when booking whether you are able offer seats and if so from where and for how many people. Anyone who would like a lift, please contact me with your details and I will do what I can to put you in touch with someone with a spare seat.

Sue Bullock

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01273 682133
sue.bullock@hotmail.co.uk

OBITUARIES

Several colleagues have died recently, some of them with obituaries published in the newspapers. Those noted are for **Norbert Lynton** (Guardian 3 Nov. 2007, Independent 7 Nov. 2007, Telegraph 14 Nov. 2007) and **David Pocock** (Guardian 24 Jan. 2008). The Bulletin's obituary for **Bruce Graham** can be found on the university's web site at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/press_office/bulletin/02nov07/article12.shtml. Below, one for **Bill Bott** appears.

Ralph Grillo has circulated one for Richard Burton, which you may not have seen. He had retired to Villeneuve-sur-Yonne in France, and become very much integrated into local life; the obituary appeared in a local paper there. In translation/summary, this is what it said:

Richard Burton died at the age of 61, from late-diagnosed leukaemia. His heart was French, as were his culinary tastes, although he retained his British sense of humour: his dog was called Frog. The local librarian reports that before he bought a house in Villeneuve-sur-Yonne he came to look at the library, an indispensable part of the environment for him. He specialised in France and its culture, but he had travelled a lot and taught all over the world; he was both an adventurer and a learned man. Among the dozens of books he had written there were three in French, on the composer Poulenc, on the Antilles, and on the literature of Martinique; he had also written, in English, an important book on Baudelaire. It was he who created the panels which framed the recent exhibition in the library on Les fleurs du mal.

Derek Oldfield (Sussex from 1966-1988) was the University's Senior Tutor in its early days, then the director of its Post-Graduate Certificate in Education, a Reader in English and Dean of the School of Cultural and Community Studies (CCS). On retirement, he worked for Continuing Education as an adult education tutor of literature in East Sussex. He died on Easter Saturday after many years of disabling illness borne with astonishing fortitude and sweetness of character. All his students and colleagues will remember his exceptional sensitivity and humour - as well as his enabling belief in themselves.

(From the Bulletin)

It is hoped that some more detail and appreciation of Derek's contribution to the university may be added in our next newsletter.

Ronald William (Bill) Bott, who died on 19 01 2008 aged 83, was the first sub-dean in the School of Molecular Sciences and was highly regarded by both students and staff for his kindness and generosity of spirit. He made a significant contribution to the setting up of research in organometallic chemistry and organic reaction mechanisms in the fledgling University of Sussex.

Bill was born on 28 07 1924 in Cologne, where his father was serving in the British army. The family soon moved to Aldershot, where Bill was raised and educated. His love of chemistry was evident quickly, and he spent the first half of the war as the assistant gas warden for the whole Aldershot area, assisting his chemistry master in issues of potential gas attacks! After serving in the Royal Air Force from 1942 to 1946, he was an undergraduate and postgraduate at Queen's University, Belfast. In 1954, Bill obtained a post as lecturer at the then University College Leicester, which became the University of Leicester in 1957. He was warden in Beaumont Hall, in the days when members of staff (provided they were unmarried) were expected to live in student residences in order to lend them some decorum. In this experience Bill developed a genuine commitment to helping students; for their part they found they could confidently turn to him as one who understood their academic problems and frustrations and who was always available for wise counsel and advice.

In research, Bill was an associate of Colin Eaborn, the founding professor of chemistry at the University of Sussex. When Colin went to Texas for two sabbatical leaves and when he was preoccupied with the problems of setting up a new chemistry department in a new university, he left his students in Bill's care and 35 research papers in well-respected journals resulted from this collaboration. Bill was a co-author in a major review (430 pp 2414 references) entitled 'Synthesis and reactions of the carbon-silicon bond' published in 1968 in A.G.MacDiarmid ed. *Organometallic compounds of the group IV elements*.

In 1964 Bill came with his highly polished sports car to Sussex when he was appointed to a post in the rapidly expanding university. He served as sub-dean under several deans. He was able to take from the deans' shoulders much responsibility for academic affairs, admissions, intermissions and student welfare. His easy contacts with faculty, students and administrators and his thorough knowledge of the university meant that many problems could be sorted out on the spot without recourse to cumbersome formal procedures. It is hard now to envisage the work of a sub-dean in the days before computerised records and email but the fact that the systems for management of student assessment, examinations, and evaluation and cataloguing of new library books remained robust long after Bill had moved on, was testimony to the clear-headed thinking that had gone into their conception.

Bill was a bibliophile. His office shelves groaned under the weight of neatly arranged books and journals. Before research workers had access to the internet their main source of data for everyday use was the department library and one of Bill's biggest contributions to the School was his management of the library in what is now the ITS machine room above the main entrance to the Chichester Building. It was vital that this was close to the laboratories where experiments were conducted. Bill made it a pleasant place to work in and his labelling system meant that data could be found with the minimum effort. Bill's work on infrastructure underpinned that of many other higher profile researchers.

Bill retired in 1981 but he continued to demonstrate in undergraduate practical classes one day a week for many years after that. He was also one of the University's principal invigilators. His meticulous attention to detail and his general unflappability continued to benefit the community as a whole.

Bill had to leave his post as warden in Leicester when he married Vivienne in 1960. She survives him, as do four sons, Simon, Adrian, Julian and Paul, and 5 grandchildren.

David Smith