

## THE SUSS-EX CLUB NEWSLETTER No. 8, June 2008

### WELCOME

- to the Summer Suss-Ex Newsletter. A number of successful activities have been held over the last few months, and more are planned – see below. There have been some changes in the membership of the Steering Group; Valerie Cromwell, Mike English and Christine Glasson have resigned, but Sue Bullock, Arnold Goldman and Nancy Holmes have joined. You can find the full membership, with copies of minutes and details of past activities, on the website at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/suss-ex/>.

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## SUSS-EX DINNER, 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2008

The Suss-Ex Club is pleased to invite all members and their partners to a dinner after which the current **Vice-Chancellor, Professor Michael Farthing**, will give a short talk about the latest developments in the University.

The dinner will be held at the **Gallery Restaurant**, City College Brighton & Hove, in Whitecross Street, Brighton, on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008 at 7.00 for 7.30pm. We will take over the whole restaurant for the evening and the meal will be cooked and served by the catering students. Those who have eaten at the Gallery Restaurant before will know that the standard of cuisine is excellent. It is very accessible, only a few minutes' walk from Brighton railway station or from the Somerfield bus stop in London Road, which is on numerous bus routes. There is an NCP car park a couple of minutes away.

Tickets are now on sale **at £25 per head**. This includes a 4-course Table d'Hôte meal, with several choices for each course including vegetarian options, plus wines with the meal. (Any additional drinks such as aperitifs or liqueurs may be purchased on the night at very reasonable prices.)

Please apply **by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2008**, using the booking form on the last page. Cheques should be made payable to the University of Sussex and both should be sent to the dinner organiser, Jackie Fuller, at the address given (not to the DARO office).

This event may be extended to current University staff and their partners if there are still spaces available after 31<sup>st</sup> July. Expressions of interest from current staff should be sent to Jackie Fuller (preferably by email) but without any money at this stage.



## THEATRE TRIPS



Here are the latest suggestions for Suss-Ex theatre trip(s). These dates may seem a little far ahead, but both are very popular and likely to get booked up. 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 below. **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 suggestions would be welcome.

September 4-13

**Michael Frayn, 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]

Stalls seats £21 (matinees £17).

October 20-23

**Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet**

This is a new production from the Royal Shakespeare Company, premiering at the Theatre Royal before a national tour. No matinee time is offered for this, as the matinee is already booked out by schools.

If you are interested in these possibilities, please let me know **by July 10** (preferably by e mail to [j.platt@sussex.ac.uk](mailto: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 on the last page: 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 and whether you would like to join dinner before (evening) or after (matinee).

Jennifer Platt

## Suss-Ex going to the dogs?

It has been suggested that a possible future outing could be to the greyhound races. A member describes this as 'Not exactly intellectual, although it could involve abstruse mathematical exercises, but it can be fun! The trackside restaurant is quite comfortable and well organised (as it has to be), has tables for six and moderate prices - to go with moderate food. There is good on-site parking. You don't have to bet if you don't want to, there is no particular pressure. A rather "let-your-hair-down-a-bit" evening.'

No precise plans have yet been made, or dates checked; after Christmas might fit in better than before. For the time being, you are simply invited to let Susan Ashton [[S.E.Ashton@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:S.E.Ashton@sussex.ac.uk)] know if you might be interested.

Any other suggestions for future activities would of course be welcome.

## Visit to Farley Farm House, the home of Roland Penrose and Lee Miller

The last newsletter, Number 7, gave a very clear and interesting summary of Roland Penrose and Lee Miller's lives. For those Suss-Ex members who haven't kept their newsletter, or didn't get around to reading all of it, a reminder that Roland Penrose was a Surrealist artist himself, the friend and biographer of Picasso, Miro, Man Ray and others and a notable figure in the movement. Lee Miller is probably now the better known of the two, partly because of the recent centenary exhibition of her photographs at the V&A, which attracted a lot of attention. They moved to Farley Farm House in 1949 with their small son Antony; Lee died there in 1977 and Roland in 1984.

We were shown a video about Farley Farm House and the family, with an introductory talk by its maker, the audio-visual specialist at the museum. After that Antony Penrose took over, with some help from his daughter Ami when the group divided, and talked eloquently and entertainingly for three hours. The house is now formally a museum but is arranged very much as it was when it was the family home, which is what it still feels like to a visitor. The dining-room is particularly interesting, with a mural on the brick fireplace wall by Roland Penrose and the long oak dining-table round which so many gifted people gathered over the years. Most walls of the house are closely hung with paintings and on one corridor there are glass cabinets with Roland's extraordinary collection of objects, some very valuable, others chosen simply because they appealed to him. Antony Penrose talked with as much freshness and enthusiasm as though he was showing the house to visitors for the very first time.

The house can only be seen by appointment, so I am sure all who went are extremely grateful to Sue Bullock for arranging such a rewarding visit.

Joy Preston

## SUSS-EX and the UNIVERSITY

From its earliest days Suss-Ex has benefited from various forms of University support, from the free use of a room for steering group meetings to staff time for mailing and emailing. The informality of these arrangements has recently been succeeded, following negotiations between the Registrar and members of the steering group, by agreement on several points. We are very pleased with the outcome, which will be reviewed after a year's experience. The main points are:

1. Rooms will be available without charge for both steering group meetings, and events arranged for Suss-Ex members generally up to four times a year
2. Essential administrative tasks have been allocated between Suss-Ex and University staff, with 1.5 days per month of the latter being available for Suss-Ex work.
3. Arrangements for the recruitment of new members as University staff leave, whether by retirement or otherwise
4. Emailing (or, if necessary, mailing) of newsletters etc to be provided by the University without charge.
5. Basic facilities will be provided for handling the group's income and expenditure.

For a little more detail on this, see the Minutes of the meeting of Mar 14<sup>th</sup> on our web site at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/suss-ex>.

## OBITUARIES

Once again we report the sad news of deaths among colleagues.

**Andrew Crozier** died on April 6; obituaries appeared in the Independent of April 16<sup>th</sup>, and in the Bulletin for April 18th

**Derek Oldfield**: an obituary appeared in the Guardian of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, and below Willy Lamont contributes one not published elsewhere.

Derek Oldfield, Reader in English and Education, died on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, aged 83. He was the lucky beneficiary of one revolution in education, and years later would contribute significantly to another. He was the middle of three boys. His mother, a single parent, kept the family just above poverty by continually moving house, and becoming a film extra. (Derek's younger brother is the corpse in a soldier's arms in Olivier's *Henry V.*) She was not over-impressed by our greatest actor: 'He squawked too much' was her verdict. She was in the mob that hounded Bill Sykes to his death in David Lean's *Oliver Twist*. With equal pertinacity she hounded a hapless Education Officer into finding a place for Derek, an 11+ failure, in the newly built Pinner County Grammar School, which transformed his life.

The 1930s was a great period for experiment in education which has never properly been chronicled. Teachers of high calibre competed for the precious few jobs available. Harrow Weald County Grammar School, founded four years before Pinner, was a pioneer; its Deputy became Pinner's first Head, along with half its staff, and all of its ideology. Common to the two schools was their liberal creativity: coeducation, a pupils' School Council, no Prize Days, no Cadet Force, no boxing, no streaming by ability. Derek thrived in this environment, and won a place at Cambridge (which he did not take up); there was a war to fight, and he fought it in the Navy. After demobilisation a desperate search for Sits Vac in the *Times Educational Supplement* yielded a post in a Catholic primary school. There could be no more unlikely start to a brilliant teaching career for a lifelong atheist, but Sister Mary Colette was no run-of-the mill Head. She recognised the qualities in her new recruit, and encouraged his experiments (bold for that time) with drama and film camera. His reputation grew as he taught in other primary schools, secondary schools and Colleges of Education.

He started a part-time degree at Birkbeck, to be completed over the same period as by the full-time students, and found the double load difficult at first. He explained to his tutor, Prof. Tillotson, that his problem was that he read very slowly. He remembered the professor leaning forward in reply: 'That, my boy, is your *only* strength'. Years later he would come across Tillotson's confidential letter in support of his application for a university post, which began 'He was slow to begin with'. Derek seized on that phrase as the title for his characteristically modest memoirs in retirement, circulated to his friends. He went on to postgraduate research at Birkbeck under the inspiring Barbara Hardy. Collaborating on a volume edited by her, he met and married Sybil, a fellow contributor, who would precede him to Sussex.

He came in 1966 to a new University at a critical stage of its development, and it was a masterstroke to appoint him. His teaching experience had left him dissatisfied with conventional methods of training teachers, as described in Nick Otty's funny but disturbing book *Learner Teacher*. He found a kindred spirit in Sybil Marshall, whose *An Experiment in Education*, based on her one-teacher primary school, had been hailed as a classic. They devised together an induction week each

year for the Sussex PGCE on a given theme, which would never be forgotten by those who took part; 'The Year of the Dragon' was especially memorable. They, with other colleagues, devised a school-based course, with practising teachers paid to supervise students in the same school for three days a week throughout the year. With modifications, that has become a norm for teacher training, but it was certainly not in 1966, when 'apprenticeship' was scorned.

The University also made Derek its Senior Tutor, responsible for the morality of all its undergraduates - in the swinging Sixties! This impossible job he did brilliantly, but made sure no successor would ever have to take it on by devising an alternative, devolved structure which has stood the test of time. He then became Dean of the School of Cultural and Community Studies. In his retirement he worked for Continuing Education as an adult education tutor in East Sussex. Despite his ill health he managed last month to be at the launch of his wife's study of the first woman civil servant, *Jeanie, an 'Army of One'*, glowing with pride. He is survived by Sybil, their four children and ten grandchildren.

Willy Lamont

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## Christmas Party

The date is not yet finalised, but there will be a party, probably in the week Dec. 15-19. Save that spot!

## Small ads

If any members would like to contact others for self-organised activities, this new small-ads section offers an opportunity.

### Bridge

Trevor Beeforth enjoys the occasional game of social bridge – not too serious or expert – and invites others, who may not have a regular partner but would like to do the same from time to time in someone's house, probably with a bottle of wine, to get in touch. ([Trevor-Beeforth@lineone.net](mailto:Trevor-Beeforth@lineone.net), or tel 507051.)

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If you are currently receiving this newsletter by post but have an e-mail address, please do let us know; e mail saves a lot of time and money. You can send your details to [alumninews@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:alumninews@sussex.ac.uk) .

## BOOKING FORMS

	<b>Theatre Trips</b>	
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<b>Noises Off</b>	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?					

<b>Romeo and Juliet</b>	Mon. Oct. 20, 7.30	Tues. Oct. 21, 7.30	Weds. Oct 22, 7.30	Thurs. Oct. 23, 7.30
Date & time OK?				
Preference?				
How many?				
Dinner?				

Please send completed forms to Jennifer Platt by July 10; for alternative addresses, see page 2.

<b>Suss-Ex Dinner</b>
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I would like.....place(s) for the Suss-Ex dinner at City College on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008.  
I enclose my cheque payable to the 'University of Sussex' for £.....

Name(s) *(please print)*:.....

Address:.....

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Telephone: .....

Email address *(please print)*:.....

I am a former/current\* member of University of Sussex staff (\*delete as appropriate)

**Please return this form and cheque by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2008 to: Jackie Fuller, 21 Pelham Square, Brighton, BN1 4ET (tel: (01273) 688538; e mail [jkfuller21@hotmail.com](mailto:jkfuller21@hotmail.com)).**