

SUSS-EX CLUB
NEWSLETTER No. 14, February 2010

Christmas is over – many thanks to Sue Bullock and her team for organising the party – and it’s time to start planning spring activities; details below.

For new members – this is a member–run club, which relies on voluntary support to keep going; the Steering Group welcomes suggestions for activities (ideally with an associated volunteer organiser), or offers to join its number. At present someone interested in helping run the programme of talks would be particularly welcome.

The Steering Group is chaired by ex-VC Sir Gordon Conway, and generally meets once a term; if you would like to come to a meeting to see what is involved, please mention it to any member. You will find the list of SG members, along with considerable information about our activities, on the web site; just put ‘Suss Ex’ under ‘search’ on the university site.

We aim to run regular activities for pleasure, and to diffuse news of interest to members, but we are also concerned to support the interests of retired members in relation to the university, and to attempt to ensure that we are not forgotten there.

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**Thursday 11 March:
'The Seagull'**

The Seagull (Chekhov, translated by Michael Frayn) at Brighton Little Theatre ... 7.45 p.m., Thursday 11 March.

If you want to join a Suss-Ex group on 11 March please let Adrian Peasgood know by 19 February, using the form on p. 7, how many tickets you would like, enclosing a cheque payable to Brighton Little Theatre for the appropriate amount. Tickets are £7.50 each. (I have already reserved a block of seats for us, and should be able to book more if there is sufficient interest.) If you have a preference for an aisle seat, or for a place as near the front as possible, please indicate this when replying.

To facilitate possible joint travel and/or pre-theatre dining, I will send everyone concerned a list of participants. (If you do not wish to be included in such a list please indicate that when booking with me.) If anyone can recommend somewhere for supper that is within a few minutes' walk of the theatre, please say.

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. To reach the theatre, go down the twitten past the pub.

**Sunday 21 March:
'Brighton boozers: a stroll through
the tavern history of central Brighton'**

Geoffrey Mead (CCE) will be leading a Brighton City Centre walk entitled 'Brighton boozers: a stroll through the tavern history of central Brighton' on Sunday 21 March starting at 10 a.m. The walk will commence from the Brighton Museum entrance, and will take about two hours. The charge per person is £3. There is a minimum viable attendance, and a maximum practicable one! **Please book early to be sure that the walk takes place - and that you are on it!** To book, please send the form on p. 7, with a cheque for £3 per person, to Adrian Peasgood, 14 Harrington Villas, Brighton BN1 6RG.

'Carousel', Lewes Operatic Society, March 22-27

No news is available yet of booking arrangements, but Arnold Goldman is working on this. If you might be interested in going, please send him your contact details at 24 Eastport Lane, Lewes, BN7 1TL, or a.goldman@cowbeech.f9.co.uk.

**Suggested Future Outing:
Lunch and private tour of the de la Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea**

“A modernist building of world renown that will become a crucible for creating a new model of cultural provision in an English seaside town which is going to lead to the growth, prosperity and the greater culture of our town.” Thus said the 9th Earl De La Warr in May 1935, as he laid the plaque which currently forms part of the floor of the Pavilion foyer.

‘This magnificent Grade One listed building has welcomed over half a million visitors since re-opening in October 2005 after a major £9 million refurbishment and redevelopment. As well as being one of this country’s architectural landmarks, it also has an enviable reputation as home to some of the best contemporary art on the international circuit today, exhibited in two beautifully restored galleries. Fresh, locally-sourced food is served in our first floor restaurant overlooking the sea ... and there is also a breathtaking roof-top terrace where you can linger to take in the panoramic view.’

de la Warr Pavilion visitor information.

The Pavilion offers private guided tours of the building for groups combined with a two-course lunch in their restaurant, offering meat, fish and vegetarian options. A suggested excursion starting with lunch, followed by a tour and talk - likely to last approximately an hour and a half will cost around £20 per person, including lunch. A tour and talk only price could be offered if members prefer that option.

No detailed plans have been made, but a mid-week afternoon in June is suggested. Please let Sue Bullock know (sue.bullock@hotmail.co.uk, or phone 01273 682133) **by 28 February** if you would be interested in an exclusive Suss-Ex Club visit, with or without lunch. Members will be expected to make their own travel arrangements, but there are likely to be lifts available for those who need them.

Member news

Simon Barnes (who worked in ITS – né Computing Services – from 1978-2005) has written a book for children of 10+, *Peter’s Escape*, which is published this month and available from the usual bookshops. It is set in and around Lewes in 1733; for more details, see www.petersescape.com. He says that he never really knew what he wanted to do, despite trying copywriting, underwriting and matchbook printing along the way, but now he’s found it, and is working on his second book.

Other short items of members’ news like this one are welcome; has anyone else been working in novel fields unrelated to their earlier careers, or found an activity that others might enjoy?

Research contributions by retired staff

You may recall that last year we published a list of research activities by our retired members for 2008. We can now update this by adding the record for the whole of 2009. The reason for doing this is that quite a few Suss Ex members are, while notionally retired, still active in research, for which some access to university facilities is required. The extent to which our needs are met can vary from one part of the university to another, and sometimes, as a minority group, we may simply get forgotten. Under the REF our contributions to the university's research output will continue to be of value. It seems likely that it will always be advantageous to those of us who wish to maintain our relationship with the research life of the university for our contributions to be noted.

If, therefore, that includes you, please send in, with your subject group affiliation, a list of your 2009 activities, such as:

- publications
 - conference papers given, and invited talks
 - prizes and honours
 - new grants
 - research students completing
 - officerships in learned societies
 - refereeing, doctoral examining, etc.
- even if notification of them has already appeared in the Bulletin.

This should if possible be done by e mail, please, and sent to j.platt@sussex.ac.uk as soon as convenient; we hope to include them all in a consolidated list in the next newsletter.

Obituaries

John Wyon Burrow, 1935-2009¹

John Burrow, who taught at Sussex from 1969 to 1995, died of cancer on 3 November at his home in Witney, Oxfordshire. Sussex was the first university in this country to offer degrees in intellectual history, and John was the first to occupy the chair in this branch of history created for him in 1981. He held this post until he moved to the Chair of European Thought at Oxford in 1995, prior to

¹ This obituary appeared first on the Intellectual History web site.

his retirement in 2000. Among several other honours that came his way was election as a Fellow of the British Academy in 1986.

John was the first person to be appointed to a 'contextual' post in the School of Social Sciences, where he taught the school's third-year course on the history and philosophy of the social sciences, known as Concepts, Methods, and Values (CMV). He had already published a path-breaking book, *Evolution and Society; A Study in Victorian Social Theory* (1966), on the pervasive influence of a variety of evolutionary theories on the social sciences during the nineteenth century. It was to herald the arrival of a more sophisticated way of writing the history of the social sciences, one that did not treat the past as being of interest only in so far as it anticipated the present. Alongside two Sussex colleagues with whom he taught CMV, Stefan Collini and Donald Winch, he went on to write a book on *That Noble Science of Politics* (1983) that extended this approach and laid the foundation for what later became known as the 'Sussex school of intellectual history'. John's unparalleled knowledge of the Whig and Burkean component within English liberalism provided him with the theme of his Carlyle lectures at Oxford, *Whigs and Liberals: Continuity and Change in English Political Thought* (1988).

John was also one of the leading British exponents of historiography, the history of history. In 1981 he published a book on *A Liberal Descent; Victorian Historians and the English Past* that was awarded the Wolfson Prize for History. Based on his contribution to a series of centenary lectures given at Sussex in the 1970s, he was later to write a short and incisive book on *Edward Gibbon* (1985). The climax to this side of John's interests came in his last major work, *A History of Histories* (2007), covering the entire period from Herodotus and Thucydides to trends in twentieth-century history. There was also a strong European component to his interests. It was first expressed in a translation of and commentary on Wilhelm von Humboldt's *Limits of State Action* (1969), and was to blossom into *The Crisis of Reason* (2000), a wide-ranging study of European scientific thinking and cultural and artistic movements during the period 1848 to 1914.

Although John left Sussex in 1995, he retained a link through the Centre for Intellectual History, which he supported by participating in its symposia and as a member of its advisory board. One of his last visits to Sussex was to attend the inaugural lecture given in 2008 by Knud Haakonssen, the present holder of the Chair of Intellectual History to which John's scholarship had first lent lustre. John is remembered with love and affection by several generations of Sussex students, and by colleagues with whom he taught and served in the old schools of Social Sciences and English and American studies. In any future history of this university, his career will be cited as vindication of the fluidity of the early structures and the distinction and distinctiveness of what could flourish within them.

Donald Winch

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, February 6, at the Meeting House, from 12 noon, followed by a reception.

Other obituaries have appeared in the *Guardian* (Nov.17, 2009) *Times* (Dec. 2, 2009) and *Independent* (Jan. 22, 2010).

Frank Gloversmith, 1926-2009

Frank Gloversmith, Lecturer in English in the old School of English and American Studies, died on 10th August 2009. A graduate of the University of Manchester, he was Head of English at Cambridge Grammar School where he met John Holloway of Queen's College. Holloway invited him to do some college teaching, which led to his appointment at Sussex in 1964. He spent the rest of his professional career at Sussex, until his retirement in 1992, apart from a year as Visiting Lecturer in Munich (1972-3) where he encountered new horizons, and his partner, Ulrike Meinhof, now Professor of German at Southampton, who survives him.

Frank's interests included the English novel and the new sociological approaches to literature, reflected not only in extremely popular lectures but in his Penguin edition of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters* (1969) and his short study of D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* (1971). In 1972 he organised a very successful conference at Sussex on Writing in the Thirties, with the participation of already legendary figures such as Cyril Connolly and Stephen Spender. His continuing engagement with the Thirties led to his edited collection *Class, Culture and Social Change: a New View of the 1930s* (1980) which was followed by a more theoretical collection on *The Theory of Reading* (1984). Vigorous, combative, energised by the 'theory wars' in English studies in the 1970s and 1980s, he espoused and commended radical approaches to his discipline with the conviction of a lay-preacher. Even in retirement he never seemed to get any older. He stimulated generations of Sussex students, including the novelist Ian McEwan whom he presented for an honorary degree in 1989.

Norman Vance

Sheila Schaffer, 1927-2009

Sheila in the Library

Sheila Schaffer, who died on 30th December 2009, will have been known city wide for her public homes in the Town Hall, the Mayor's Parlour and the Pensioners' Forum. However, for nearly 25 years her public home was in the University of Sussex Library.

Sheila came to Brighton with husband Bernard and son Simon when Bernard was appointed a reader in politics in the university in the mid sixties. She became a mature student at the (then) Brighton Library School and, on qualifying, joined the library staff in 1967. That was still a formative period for both university and library. Over two whole decades (the 1970s and 1980s) Sheila played a front line role in the Documents Section of the Library, developing the collections of official publications, grey literature, political party publications and pressure group material, and exploiting these collections in the service of faculty, research workers and undergraduates.

Her exuberance, friendliness, good humour and generous spirit over the whole of her service years were valued by colleagues and library users. Probably many members of the Suss-Ex Club will have been grateful for the specialist, expert and supportive help that they and their students received from Sheila during those years. Her professionalism contributed to the reputations of the library within the university and of the university within the academic world.

In 1987 Sheila was elected as a Labour councillor for Hanover Ward. She chose her retirement from the library to coincide with the run up to the European elections of 1992 so that she could assist in the canvassing for the local Labour candidate.

David Kennelly

Sheila in politics

Sheila was always a political animal – as a teenager in the Second World War she joined both the Young Communist League and Habonim, the organisation for young Zionists, and all her life she remained true to her hopes for a just and united world, ending it as a member of the Labour Party for over 40 years and a member of Jews for Justice for Palestinians.

Sheila always translated her commitments into action; for years she worked as a grassroots Labour Party member, chairing the branch, organising meetings, heading election campaigns. She was elected as councillor for the Hanover ward in 1987, and for ten years was an effective and respected representative. She also chaired the Women's committee, and was Deputy Chair of the Environment Committee. And of course she served as Mayor of Brighton. She never gave up her active campaigning. She had always been a member of CND and a campaigner for peace, and all this continued and was augmented after she left the Council. She helped revive the Brighton & Hove United Nations Association as its Chair. She worked for older people through the Pensioners' Forum, the Pensioners' Association and Age Concern. She was also an inveterate demonstrator; she believed that "being there" was important, and only two years ago she was sleeping on a Church hall floor in Glasgow on the way to demonstrate against Trident at Faslane.

Joyce Edmond-Smith

Other notices for her have appeared in the *Evening Argus* for Jan. 4, 6 and 13, and in the *IDS Yellow Monday* for 11th Jan. [all available online via <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/suss-ex/Obituaries.html>].

Booking forms

The Seagull

I would like ... places for the theatre visit on 11 March, and enclose cheque, payable to Brighton Little Theatre, for £ (i.e. £7.50 per place)

Name:

Address:

.....
.....
.....

Phone: Email:.....

I will distribute tickets either at a pre-theatre supper, or at the door. If you would prefer to receive tickets by post, please send an SAE with your booking.

Adrian Peasgood
14 Harrington Villas, Brighton BN1 6RG
01273 508620
adrian@peasgood.plus.com

Brighton Boozers walk

I would like ... places for the walk on 21 March, and enclose a cheque, payable to G. Mead, for £ (i.e. £3 per place)

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Name:

.....

Address:

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.....

.....

Phone: Email:.....

Adrian Peasgood
14 Harrington Villas, Brighton BN1 6RG
01273 508620
adrian@peasgood.plus.com