

THE SUSS-EX CLUB

NEWSLETTER No.21 NOVEMBER 2011

This issue contains details and a booking form for the Christmas Party, a notice about a theatre trip, reviews of recent Suss-Ex activities, and a request for help in the compilation of obituaries.

Christmas Party	1		
Christmas Party booking form	5	Baroness Andrews' talk	2
Theatre Trip Permanent Way	1	Henry V	3
US 50th Anniversary	2	Obituary archive	4



CHRISTMAS PARTY

12.30 - 2.30 pm, Tuesday 13 December 2011

The annual party for Suss-Ex Club members, their guests and USPAS former staff will take place on **Tuesday 13 December**, from 12.30-2.30 pm, in the Meeting House Quiet Room. This is an opportunity to catch up with friends and former colleagues. USPAS members will receive a separate invitation via the USPAS Office and are requested to reply directly to Tracey Llewellyn. Suss-Ex members should use the booking form on p 5 and send it to Sue Bullock, 104 Bonchurch Road, Brighton BN2 3PH. If you are paying by card, the form and card details may be returned by email to: sue.bullock@hotmail.co.uk

The cost to Suss-Ex Club members is **£6.00** each and includes a buffet lunch and drinks. The closing date is **Friday 2 December 2011**.

THEATRE TRIP

David Hare's **THE PERMANENT WAY** is being presented at the New Venture Theatre, Bedford Place, Brighton, in February. Lyn Gardner in the *Guardian*, reviewing the original National Theatre production in 2004, wrote:

"Hare's latest offering is not a play in any traditional sense, and it is not only about the railways, although it is the very British bungle of railway privatisation and its aftermath that is his focus. The playwright interviewed dozens of people, including civil servants, railway workers and executives, and those bereaved by, or the survivors of, the four major UK rail crashes of the past seven years. From these encounters, he stitched together a collage of experience. His discovery adds up to a terrible indictment of a culture, which puts profit before people and where a degree in business management is valued above real skills and knowledge. You leave the theatre aroused and angry, though also desperately impotent."

How much interest is there in a Suss-Ex group visit? Available performances are at **7.45 p.m. Saturday 18 February, 2.30 p.m. Sunday 19 February, and 7.45 p.m. Wednesday 22, Thursday 23, Friday 24, Saturday 25 February.**

Please let me know if you would to join a group visit, and, if so, your preferred date(s). (Places are unreserved, and seating is 'fringe' style.) Tickets will be £8 for the earlier performances, and £9 for those on the 24th and 25th. Assuming that there is sufficient interest I will choose the most popular date and advise everyone accordingly. Booking is not yet open, but a prompt response to me will ensure that I can do an order as soon as it is.

Adrian Peasgood

Email adrian@peasgood.plus.com,

phone 01273 508620

or write to 14 Harrington Villas, Brighton BN1 6RG.

RECENT SUSS-EX ACTIVITIES

Sussex through the Ages: the changing Sussex experience

The 50th Anniversary of the founding of the University was celebrated over the weekend of 9-11 September with campus-wide activities. The Suss-Ex Club was asked to arrange an event at which alumni and former staff could meet. We asked three people, from the three main academic areas of the University, to speak, and each to invite a former student to join them in commenting on their experience.

David Streeter and Richard Burden Science

Carol Kedward and Sue Hepburn Social Science

Stuart Laing and Philippa Lyon Humanities

The Chouwen lecture theatre in the Medical School was full and after the initial presentations Jennifer Platt invited contributions from the audience, which were varied, interesting, and commendably concise. Consequently a large proportion of the audience was able to participate, share memories and show unselfconscious enthusiasm for their experience at Sussex. Discussion and reminiscence continued over tea and during the evening social events. Several of the speakers said that people had buttonholed them later to talk more.

David Smith

Talk and Supper with Baroness Andrews

A distinguished Sussex graduate, Baroness (Kay) Andrews, returned to campus last week to speak about the work of English Heritage, which she has chaired since 2009. Members of Suss-Ex, gathered over drinks in Bramber House on Friday 11 November to hear about the diversity of English Heritage's work.

It runs more than 400 historic properties, employing many specialists. "If you want to know about Henry the Second's stonemasons, we've got people who can tell you about them," English Heritage's properties range from prehistoric flint factories to nuclear bunkers, and have 11 million visitors a year; the organisation represents one of the country's largest industries. Recent cuts have affected the range of work that can be done, but one response to such difficulties has been to develop more imaginative ways of interpreting the past to visitors, to bring it to life for them - so that more money can be raised to support fragile buildings. "The gift shops apparently do a roaring

trade in chain mail." Its priorities also include the use of preservation to encourage economic regeneration, with some notable successes in former industrial areas.

The talk was followed by an excellent supper in the newly refurbished restaurant in Bramber House. Sussex-Ex members much enjoyed meeting each other and talking with members of the Brighton Regency Society who were also invited.

Jennifer Platt

Henry V

A group of us went on Tuesday 15 November to the Theatre Royal, to see the Propeller Theatre Company's production of Henry V. The only previous production I can remember seeing was the film version, with Laurence Olivier, and my main memories of the text were the two rousing speeches to the army, something to do with tennis balls and Henry's courtship of Katherine. I was aware that this all-male production would be rather different from the film version, but I think we were all startled when the play started abruptly, before any lights were dimmed, with loud singing from a troop of soldiers in modern combat gear marching down the aisles on either side of the theatre. Once on the stage, the same soldiers became the Chorus and gave us the prologue ("O for a Muse of fire..."), much as Shakespeare wrote it, but each phrase from a different individual – a very effective method, which set the scene well for the rest of the play. Scenes flowed into one another seamlessly, with members of the cast taking on particular roles by quickly donning an archbishop's robe or a king's crown over their camouflage uniform, and those playing female parts often reappearing in the next scene back in their army kit. The scenery consisted largely of moveable scaffolding with detachable ladders and stairs, so scene changes were swift and almost a part of the action.

This was a fast-moving and dramatic production, with great clarity, effective acting and some neat bits of business. The tennis ball scene, where the French ambassador delivers the Dauphin's insulting gift of tennis balls as a more suitable occupation for Henry, has two binfuls of tennis balls poured onto the stage as the gift is revealed; two of these balls reappear a few scenes later in the bosom of Princess Katherine, played to great effect by Karl Davies (earlier executed as one of the English conspirators against Henry – "one man in his time plays many parts"!). The two well-known speeches, "Once more unto the breach" at the siege of Harfleur and "This day is call'd the feast of Crispian" to rouse the troops before Agincourt, were excellently delivered by Dugald Bruce-Lockhart, who made Henry a very believable and human character, worried and concerned before the battle but determined not to show it to his men, and suitably embarrassed as he tries later to woo Katherine in broken French.

I found this, as I think most people did, a memorable performance, whose warlike theme and modern dress brought uncomfortable reminders of our troops serving in Afghanistan. The range of emotions was well conveyed, and the cast got rousing applause at the end of the evening.

Robert Smith

Richard Jackson adds:

A party of 12 met at Carluccios for dinner before going to see a very spirited performance by an all-male cast in modern military uniforms. The diction was clear, while sound effects appropriate to modern battles gave a good sense of the mayhem of the conflict. As a bonus, we were entertained by the cast during the interval to a selection of folk songs in the bar. We noticed several other Suss-Ex members in the audience who were not part of our party. Overall, a very enjoyable evening.

OBITUARY ARCHIVE

The Suss-Ex website, accessible through the link

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/suss-ex/Obituaries.html>

contains obituaries of many former staff. Most of these have been published in the *Bulletin* but there are also links to longer documents in the national press. As part of the 50th anniversary celebrations the Suss-Ex club decided to explore the possibility of making this archive comprehensive, so that, if possible, the work of all who had contributed to the University was recorded.

I undertook to pilot this idea by putting together obituaries for the 14 members of the chemistry faculty who have died in the last 50 years. I knew each one personally but I asked other retired staff to write about people they had worked closely with, then asked a couple of others to read the collection as a whole to see that we had obtained a fair balance between individuals. There is a bit more work to do but the end is in sight. The obituaries fall into two broad categories. One comprises those who were not of FRS status, but who nevertheless made significant contributions both to Sussex and to the general scientific literature. Without Suss-Ex, these people would be lost to the University without trace, since they are unknown to present staff, Human Resources have only very sketchy records of those not on their electronic database, and, in the case of chemistry faculty, all staff records were thrown out in one of the school reorganisations. The other category comprises the FRSs and a Nobel Prizewinner. For these, authoritative assessments of their work have been published in newspapers, learned journals, the *Biographical Memoirs of the Royal Society* or the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Here we have given references to these sources but, in cases where much of a person's work has been done outside Sussex, we have added comments about specific contributions made here.

Independently, the Physics and Astronomy subject group have set up a Wiki:

<http://history.phys.susx.ac.uk/>

edited by David Bailin and Robert Smith. This contains links to obituaries published in the press and academic literature, obituaries published in the *Bulletin*, and accounts by still living people of the part they have played in the University. Since the Wiki is open to all there is scope for interactive dialogue between colleagues about policy decisions and the significance of contributions to research and teaching.

Can we extend these initiatives to other subject groups? If there are independent attempts to record what other groups have done for the University can we bring them together to make a resource for future historians and so move to our goal of making a comprehensive archive of those who made the University's first 50 years? If you have comments about this project or, better still, are willing to compile a collection of obituaries of the people you knew, please get in touch with me [j.d.smith@sussex.ac.uk] or Charles Goldie [c.m.goldie@sussex.ac.uk].

David Smith



CHRISTMAS PARTY

12.30 - 2.30pm, Tuesday 13 December 2011

The annual get-together for Suss-Ex Club members, their guests and USPAS former staff will take place on **Tuesday 13 December**, from 12.30-2.30pm, in the Meeting House Quiet Room – an opportunity to catch up with friends and former colleagues. USPAS members will receive a separate invitation via the USPAS Office and are requested to reply to Tracey Llewellyn direct.

The cost to Suss-Ex Club members is **£6.00** each and includes a buffet lunch and drinks. The closing date is **Friday 2 December 2011**.

Please complete this form and return with a cheque or credit/debit card details to Sue Bullock, 104 Bonchurch Road, Brighton BN2 3PH, **OR** if you are paying by card, the form and card details may be returned by email to: sue.bullock@hotmail.co.uk

As usual, organisation of the event largely depends on volunteers, so some help will be needed during the party and with clearing up afterwards. Offers of help will be much appreciated: please contact Sue for details (email as above, or phone 01273 682133).

.....
Christmas Party: 13 December 2011

Booking Details (to be returned not later than **2 December**)

Your Details

Name(s)

Address

Telephone Email address

Please book place/s at £6.00 each	Total £
---	----------------------

Payment Details

I enclose a cheque for £..... (payable to **University of Sussex**).

Please charge my debit / credit / card with £.....

Card Type (Visa, Mastercard, Amex, etc)

Card number.....

Valid from.....to..... Maestro issue number

Security Code.....(last 3 numbers on signature strip on reverse of card – 4 on the front for Amex cards)

Name on card.....

Signed.....