

# THE SUSS-EX CLUB

## NEWSLETTER No. 22 FEBRUARY 2012

This issue contains a notice about a theatre trip and a showing of the 50th Anniversary film about the University, three obituaries and a request for details of research publications

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### Theatre Trips



Here is the latest suggestion for a Suss-Ex theatre trip. The play is Alan Bennett's **THE LADY IN THE VAN**, starring the well-respected Nichola McAuliffe, giving what the *Guardian* reviewer described as 'a star turn'. Unfortunately the number of performances at which group rates are available is more limited than usual – see below for the possibilities. Ticket prices for the matinees are £16 on Thursday and £21 on Saturday; the available evenings are £25. As usual, a trip will be organised only if enough people (at least 10) sign up for one date for us to get the group reduction. Dinner together beforehand, or after a matinee, will be booked for those who want it. There have been some complaints about Carluccio's recently, so this time we shall try Strada (even closer to the theatre!).

If you are interested, let Jennifer Platt know **by Feb. 29th** (preferably by email to [j.platt@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:j.platt@sussex.ac.uk) - or phone 01273 555025, internal mail to the Freeman Centre on campus, or post to 98 Beaconsfield Villas, Brighton BN1 6HE). A booking needs to be made promptly to ensure that tickets are available. Please use the slips on the last page: just mark all days/times 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). You will be notified of the outcome very soon after Feb 29th.

### Forthcoming Event Film Tea Exhibition

On **Friday 13th April 4 pm - 6pm**, there will be a Suss-Ex event, not to be missed, and also **FREE!** Make a note in your diary.

We start at 4 pm with a showing of the 50-minute film **Sussex: A Golden Opportunity**. This documentary was made last year as part of the University's 50th anniversary celebrations. Sussex graduate and TV director Mary McMurray was given *carte blanche* when she agreed to direct it, and the result includes some quite trenchant reflections on the way the Sussex adventure has turned out, together with, of course, much nostalgia and humour.

We continue at 5 pm with tea and cake, and a small **exhibition of sketches of Falmer House** as it was being built. The sketches date from 1961-2 yet Barbara Shields, whose work they are, remains a busy and active artist. Her work has been bought by a number of galleries and by the University, but her Falmer House sketches have never before been exhibited. Barbara's late husband Ted was the University's first Registrar. She hopes to be present at our event.

The venue is the Chowen Lecture Theatre and its foyer, in the Brighton & Sussex Medical School on the Sussex campus. To assist with catering, please let Charles Goldie know if you expect to come: e-mail [c.m.goldie@sussex.ac.uk], or 'phone 01273 555025 (answerphone after 7 rings), or post to 98 Beaconsfield Villas, Brighton BN1 6HE.

The Suss-Ex Club is grateful to the University's Development and Alumni Office for sponsoring the event and for practical help with the film and exhibition.

### **Paving the Way**

To mark its 50th anniversary, the University is organising an appeal to boost support for scholarships and hardship bursaries for future generations. A gift to Sussex students will be recognised in a new redbrick pathway joining Fulton (Library) Square to Arts A. Further details may be found on the University website.

## **Recent Suss-Ex Activities**

### **Spamalot**

On 5th January, ten of us went to the Theatre Royal's Christmas entertainment, which this year was not exactly a pantomime, although it certainly had elements of that in it. It was *Spamalot* - perhaps best described as "Monty Python and the Holy Grail - the Musical" - with Eric Idle playing God. You can guess the plot and the style from my alternative title, even if you haven't ever seen the original (1975) film. The translation to a musical format was very effective, and lost none of the bizarre humour and terrible one-liners that one expects from Monty Python. The cast was enthusiastic and clearly having a wonderful time, especially when King Arthur (Marcus Brigstocke) managed to forget some lines and had to improvise (even the grim and menacing Knight of Ni was laughing at that point). It's impossible to give a coherent account of the evening (it was in fact coherent in a crazy sort of way, but not descriptably so); suffice it to say that I think most of us enjoyed it thoroughly. Thanks to Jennifer for once again organising this, despite having seen it last year and not coming to this particular performance.

*Robert Smith*

## **Research Contributions by Retired Staff**

For several years we have collected in January a list of retired members' research activities for the previous year. The reason for doing this is that many 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 simply get forgotten. 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. We are now compiling the record for 2011.

Please, therefore, send in, with your name and subject group affiliation, a list of your 2011 activities. These could include:

- publications
  - conference papers given, and invited talks
  - fellowships
  - 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 email, please, and sent to [j.platt@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:j.platt@sussex.ac.uk) as soon as convenient; we plan to include all activities in a consolidated list in the next newsletter.

## Obituaries

### **Virginia Longley-Cook 1928-2011**

Virginia read law at Girton College, Cambridge where she obtained her BA in 1950 and her LLB (now LLM) in 1951. Anecdotal evidence from Sydney Prevezer, a former Head of the Law Department, was that she obtained the highest first in her year. It is certainly true that she had a razor sharp intellect and published academic articles of the highest quality. Whilst her output was undoubtedly 4\*, in current REF terms, the whole process would have been anathema to Virginia who saw the pursuit of knowledge and the practice of law as ends in themselves and not metrics with which to judge academics. She loved teaching, and those whom she taught had great affection for her. Many are now leading lawyers in firms of solicitors, or barristers and QCs.

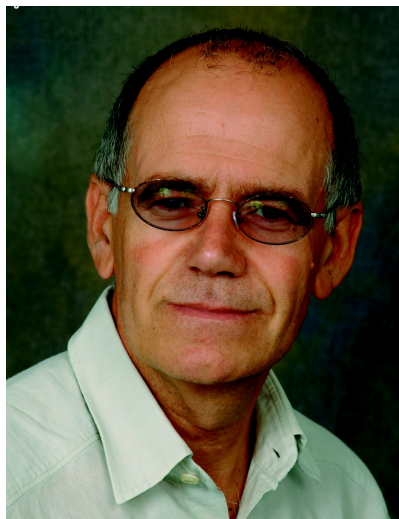
Having spoken to some of them since her death it is quite clear that she had a gentle but provocative intellect whose memorable turns of phrase and gentle Socratic method are remembered to this day. As one QC said, “whenever I open a book on Tort I think of Virginia”. Another senior lawyer recounted that he could not go through Lewes tunnel without thinking of the hypothetical facts which prompted concern about a potential car accident and a fire breaking out – all tied in to tortious liability, causation and damages. Her musings in lectures, which usually started with “I often wonder...”, would then pose some complex scenario and frequently involved dangerous instructions issued by the Chief Constable of Sussex to his officers - all devices to stimulate discussion on her specialist area of Tort. Another senior lawyer said that there was always a certain playfulness about these diversions from the ‘set text’ of her lectures and that in her seminars she was always kind and encouraging. This was also the experience of her academic colleagues.

Virginia was called to the Bar at a time when women in the profession were extremely rare. Her pupil-master, Sebag-Shaw, had said that the last thing he wanted was a woman pupil! Virginia’s intellect and ability won him over and all turned out well. Virginia’s career was set fair and a

brilliant career at the Bar beckoned. However, in 1954 she married Hilary who worked for the Iraqi Petroleum Company; they moved to Iraq and settled in Basra. When her first son was born things proved problematic and she was flown to Kirkuk where the birth took place. Recent events in that country would have elicited a very wry smile and suitable *bon mot* from Virginia! In 1958 she witnessed the uprising and when the King of Iraq was killed she and Hilary moved back to this country and settled at Frant. Following Hilary's death Virginia remained in Frant until a couple of years ago when she moved to Wadhurst. After her return from Iraq, and when her boys were old enough, Virginia taught at Kent College in the 1960s and 70s before taking up an appointment at Sussex. This was described by one of her sons as "the happiest of times". She retired from Sussex in 1989 and was subsequently appointed Lecturer Emeritus. As a colleague she was a mentor and friend who was respected by all. In meetings her dry witticisms and observations followed by a raised eyebrow and quiet "well!" could be relied upon to reduce us all to giggles. Virginia was from another generation of female lawyers – some of the first at the Bar and in academia. Her professional and personal achievements were quietly outstanding and her contribution lives on in generations of lawyers and academics as well as in her children and grandchildren.

*Meryll Dean*

### **John Riddington**



John Riddington, Senior Lecturer in Engineering in the Department of Engineering and Design, died on 18th November 2010 aged 61. A Civil Engineering graduate of the University of Southampton, where he also obtained his PhD, John initially worked in the Government's now defunct Property Services Agency, where, under the auspices of overseas aid projects, he was involved with road bridge designs for remote areas of northern Pakistan. He joined the Mechanical and Structural group in the old School of Engineering and Applied Sciences in 1978.

John was very precise and meticulous, attributes that were of great advantage in his university work. He served as Subject secretary and School Academic secretary, positions in which his knowledge and care about detail were tremendous assets. On many occasions he advised against, and thus prevented, poor decisions with regard to course development or other changes because he could foresee the implications. This attention to detail also paid dividends in his teaching, where the lecture notes produced for students were always precise and complete. He was a popular academic amongst the student body.

John's prime area of research interest was in large-scale infill masonry structures where he achieved an international reputation. His research required considerable ingenuity as the large scale testing facilities commonly needed for such research were not available within the university, and this led him to develop finite element analyses that enabled his ideas and theories to be assessed. Following internal departmental reorganisation, John was able to utilise his FE experience in assisting other established research groups within the engineering department.

Outside of his university life, John was very interested in politics and was a keen supporter of the Liberal Democrats. For years he worked as a grassroots Lib Dem supporter in his home town of Haywards Heath, where he was elected to the Town Council and also served as Deputy Mayor. His other interests were wine and "growing things". He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of grape varieties and vineyards which complemented his interest in cooking. Some of his cooking activities involved his own produce, but he was generally interested in plants, and visitors to his university office will remember his collection of cacti and in particular the one plant that reached from floor to ceiling. His interests in food and drink made John an excellent host and dinner at his house was always a culinary treat. He was in fact a very sociable man, although this was not always apparent as his outward persona was of a quiet and reserved person, but it was John who would encourage colleagues to attend social functions within the University and who organised the subject group annual dinner.

John's first wife Leila died of cancer in 1998. He married again in 2005 and is survived by his widow Jenny, his daughter Kristina and three adult stepchildren.

*Pat Morrell*

### **Guy Routh 1916-1993**

Guy Routh was appointed to a Lectureship in Economics at Sussex in 1962 and was a member of the School of African and Asian Studies until he retired in 1981. Alongside Tibor Barna and Michael Lipton, he was part of the first group of teachers of economics.

Guy was born on 24 March 1916 in Krugersdorp, South Africa, where his father managed the hospital on the West Rand mine. His family were Scottish in origin and included doctors and missionaries who had worked in South Africa for several generations. Guy graduated from Witwatersrand in 1938 with a Bachelor of Commerce degree and completed a PhD at the London School of Economics in 1951. Before that, in 1942, he joined the artillery regiment as an officer and served in North Africa. He was also a member of the Springbok Legion, an anti-racist and anti-fascist group composed of left-wing sympathisers who went on to join the African National Congress and its military wing. Guy was on good terms with his contemporaries within the ANC, especially Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, and Govan Mbeki. It was through these contacts that Thabo Mbeki, Govan's son, later to become the second post-apartheid President of South Africa, came to Sussex in 1962 to study for an undergraduate degree in economics, with Guy acting as his personal tutor.

Before and after military service Guy worked for the Industrial Council for the Clothing Industry in the Transvaal, an organisation that acted as an intermediary between management and unions representing black as well as white workers. He was also a member of the Communist Party of South Africa. On both grounds he came under suspicion and was placed under house arrest by the Nationalist Government. Anticipating treason charges Guy was smuggled out of the country to London in 1954, leaving behind his wife, Thelma, and their three children, who joined him six

months later. The family home in Hampstead became a haven for visiting South Africans and was enlivened further by Guy's talents as a guitarist and folk singer.

As a student at LSE he held a post as research officer for the Post Office Engineering Union and was later appointed to a lectureship in management studies at North-Western Polytechnic between 1955 and 1957. From there he went on to become senior research officer at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research from August 1957 until his appointment at Sussex. Guy was later to be promoted to a Readership and had visiting appointments in North America at Columbia and the University of California. More significantly, perhaps, he also worked in Tanzania at the newly founded University of Dar es Salaam as part of a Rockefeller project for East Africa, and later on a 5-year plan for the government of Madagascar.

Guy's speciality within economics was labour economics and industrial relations. He worked at the International Labour Organisation in Geneva and for the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service at home. His first major piece of published research was *Occupation and Pay in Great Britain* (1965), a study in modern economic history covering the period 1906-60 that charted the changing size and pay structure of occupational classes measured against broader changes in the industrial configuration of the economy. Guy was a firm believer in basing economics directly on empirical work: he was opposed to the abstractions of neo-classical economics and was what, in a North American context, would be known as an Institutionalists. A book on *The Origin of Economic Ideas* (1975) assembled a large and eclectic body of dissident voices to testify on behalf of the heterodox position Guy espoused. It was also to inform the 'alternative' textbook he published in 1984.

Guy lived in a state of enforced exile from South Africa for nearly 40 years, but was active in support of anti-apartheid causes in this country, regularly attending and occasionally being arrested at demonstrations outside South Africa House. Thelma, his wife, an Afrikaaner (né Geldenhuys), enjoyed greater freedom of movement and used it to engage in political and philanthropic work in Africa. Guy and Thelma were married for nearly 50 years and had 5 children, one of whom, Stephen, died tragically of polio during a period of leave in East Africa in 1969. Thelma made a point of returning to Uganda almost every year after that, where she founded an organisation that supported a textile workshop for disabled women. In common with many others Guy left the Communist Party after the invasion of Hungary in 1956, but he retained the idealism, which had led him to join the party, throughout his life. He and Thelma had a well-deserved reputation as generous hosts and adventurous European motorists. One of the uncompleted projects for which they are remembered was the purchase an abandoned village in the Pyrenees as a vacation home for Sussex academics and their families.

Most of the above is based on information supplied by Mary Routh, Guy and Thelma's daughter, who in conjunction with her brothers, Adam and Martin, is compiling a collection of papers on their parents that can be deposited in the special collections section of the Sussex Library, where it will be of considerable interest to future historians of South Africa and the University of Sussex.

*Donald Winch*



# Theatre Trip booking form



**Please be sure to submit the form to Jennifer Platt by Feb. 29th.**

|                     |                      |                      |                      |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| The Lady in the Van | Weds. April 11, 7.45 | Thurs. Apr. 12, 2.30 | Thurs. Apr. 12, 7.45 | Sat. April. 14, 2.30 |
| Date & time OK?     |                      |                      |                      |                      |
| Preference?         |                      |                      |                      |                      |
| How many?           |                      |                      |                      |                      |
| Dinner?             |                      |                      |                      |                      |

Name: .....

E mail and/or postal address:

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