



Association of Open University Graduates Nation 12 - Ireland

Edition 9

July 2016

AGM and Social Weekend

AOUG had a very successful Annual General Meeting and Social Weekend at the Palace Hotel, Buxton, from the 13th to 15th May. The weekend began on Friday afternoon with a visit to Poole Cavern followed by a local Derbyshire Quiz in the evening. On Saturday morning the AGM business was conducted. In the afternoon the Executive Committee were committed to the affairs of AOUG while members and visitors had an opportunity to visit Chatsworth House and Gardens, a Gala Dinner was held in the evening with an excellent Speaker and Band. The Guest of Honour was the Mayor of High Peak. On Sunday morning members went on a visit to Eyam Village in Derbyshire, exploring the effects and containment of the Plague in 1665-66.

The AGM/Social Weekend 2017 is to be held in Region 09, the North. Following much research in the Area the most suitable option was the Blackwell Grange Hotel in Darlington for the weekend 19th – 21st May. So I look forward to seeing you there.

Ireland - What has been happening?

Since our last Newsletter Events have taken place in Dublin and in the North.

First of all a visit to Powerscourt Town House in William Street, Dublin organised by Sean O'Broin. This historical building served as Lord Powerscourt's Town House and Courtyard in the 18th Century. Although now converted to a shopping centre the stunning architecture has been retained largely intact.

A further meeting in Dublin took place at the Teachers' Centre in Parnell Street followed by a visit to the Garden of Remembrance in Parnell Square. The Garden also contains the 'Children of Lir' sculpture by Oisín Kelly. This depicts the figures of four children/four swans to emulate the associated Irish legend.

On the 25th June we met at the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust Centre at Castle Espie, in Comber, County Down. This event was organised by John Ringland. The waterfowl collection at Castle Espie is home to the largest collection of ducks, geese and swans in Ireland. Many of the birds will nibble grain directly from your hand especially the ducklings as can be seen from the photograph. A bonus at the Centre is a gallery devoted to the life and times of Sir Peter Scott. One of his achievements was a major re-introduction programme to save the Nene from extinction when he brought two of the only Nenes remaining in the world from Hawaii. In the afternoon we were able to take in the Comber Festival where a variety of events were ongoing, Brass Bands, Tractor Display, Food Presentations with the 'Comber Earlies' being available. For those of you who are into potatoes, members got quite excited in being able to obtain the 'Comber Earlies'.



Members feeding ducklings at Castle Espie – Taken by Mary Niblett

Looking Ahead – Developing Ireland

As newly elected Executive Representative for Ireland I am interested in Members' views on how you would like AOUG to progress. Please complete and return the response Form at the end of the Newsletter. I am particularly interested in obtaining local contacts in the Midlands, West and North West areas. By way of introduction an event is available in Athlone on Saturday, 10th September at 11 am. We can explore the Castle which covers both a chronological and thematic sequence of the periods of history through the Viking and Norman occupation from a medieval and political context. Of particular interest will be the Siege of Athlone in 1691. Included in the Castle is a display from the life and musical career of John McCormack who was born in Athlone. Full details available in your next OMEGA.

For Christmas (Saturday, 9th December 12.30 pm) we meet at the Hilton Hotel in Belfast which has traditionally been organised by John Ringland. This also provides an opportunity to visit Belfast's Continental Christmas Market which has grown from strength to strength in recent years.

In January (Saturday, 21st, 11.30 am) we are again in Dublin with a visit to Swords Castle organised by Sean O'Broin. The Castle has over eight hundred years of history. Excavation presently taking place has still got secrets to reveal. Access should also be available to the grounds of St. Columba's Church and by special arrangement to the Church itself which has historical connections with St Colmcille.

It is hoped that from your feedback we will be able to move forward with further events in 2017.

Mary Niblett – Executive Representative

Friday 7th October 2016

**AOUG Foundation for
Education Research Awards**

Followed by

AOUG Foundation Lecture

**"An Astronomer's view of the Birth, the Life and
the Death of the Stars"**

**to be given by Glenn White,
Professor of Astronomy**

**£10 for full or part day including a buffet lunch -
Admission by ticket or invite only.**

**Tickets available from AOUG Office
aoug@open.ac.uk or 01908 653316**

*"If you have never been to the OU campus before,
then this is your perfect opportunity to explore the
beautiful grounds."*

AOUG website updated

As you will have seen, the website has recently undergone some subtle changes. The navigation has been redesigned, the home page has seen some updates to layout, including a new dynamic upcoming events section, the News and OMEGA pages have been redesigned and we have a new Google Custom Search. However the most significant changes have occurred 'under the bonnet' with the whole site being re-coded to behave responsively, making it more user-friendly for visitors on mobile devices of all shapes and sizes. At the same time we've also done a lot of housekeeping, removing outdated material and tidying up links. Why not take a look at www.aoug.org.uk – we'd appreciate your feedback.

Region 12 Directory

AOUG Office		AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA	01908 653316 aoug@open.ac.uk
Executive Representative	Mary Niblett	Glenanore, Ballymacarbry, Via Clonmel, Co. Waterford	00353 (0)5261 85480 maryniblett@btinternet.com

Events' Contacts:

Belfast	John Ringland	16 Marlo Drive, Bangor, Co. Co. Down, BT19 6NW	028 91 46892
Dublin	Sean O'Broin	22 The Drive, Newtown Hall, Castledown Estate, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.	Ssob3012@gmail.com

Diary Dates

Saturday 10th September, 11am

Athlone Castle Visitor Centre

Meet in Café prior to exploring Castle. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. Admission charge 8 Euros/6 for Senior Citizens. We can also explore other attractions in the Town, have lunch in a local restaurant and plan future events. Venue easily accessible by Bus or Rail. Parking space available.

Saturday 9th December, 12.30pm

Festive Christmas Lunch

Meet in the entrance of the Hilton Hotel, 4 Lanyon Place, Belfast City. John will be carrying a copy of OMEGA. The Hotel is close to Belfast Central Railway Station, bus services and shopping areas. Guests of Members welcome.

Saturday 21st January 2017, 11.30am

Swords Castle and St. Columba's Church

Meet in the Courtyard of the Castle. The tour will begin with a visit to the Castle and the Archbishops manorial residence. After lunch in a local restaurant the group will visit the Grounds of St. Columba's Church to view its Round Tower which is the only remaining part of the medieval Abbey Building. It is hoped to arrange a visit to the church building which is a listed protected structure. Please notify Sean O'Broin of your intention to attend to give some indication of numbers for tours to be arranged.

Please complete attached response form and return to the AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA or by email to aoug@open.ac.uk

Response Form to update our Records and register your interests

Name.....P I Number.....

My current e-mail address is

My home phone number is.....My mobile is.....

I am interested in being a Local Contact for..... Area

I expect to attend the following events.....

I would prefer to attend activities such as.....

A suitable meeting place in my area would be.....

I would like to attend.....

I would prefer weekends.....weekdays.....morning.....afternoon.....evening.....

I am willing to arrange a single event for.....