



## ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN THE NORTH WEST

**Edition 8**

**Summer 2015**

If this is the first Local Newsletter for the Region you have received, then a warm welcome to you. If it is not the first and you graduated some time ago, then an equally warm hello and let me introduce myself.

I am now the new Executive Representative for the North West. My name is Marian and I am one of the founder members of the AOUG. Years ago a notice appeared in Sesame, the student magazine at that time, asking if anyone wanted an organisation for graduates where they could keep in touch, please send off £10, which I did. Which I suppose shows how trusting I was.

Within eighteen months of the organisation being constituted I became Treasurer and then had a spell as the Regional Representative (as they were known then) before once again, becoming Treasurer. Some eighteen years later, here I am again, acting as the Executive Representative

I have attended my first meeting of the Executive Committee and it was lovely to have the opportunity to visit the campus, especially in the Summertime. Walton Hall stands out from amongst the newer brick buildings since it is painted white and stands at the head of the main driveway. The gardens surrounding it are well planted and colourful. The nearby de-consecrated church, now used by the Music faculty, remains part of the history of the site which now forms the very large campus. I know I imagined the campus for a university without a resident cohort of students would be much smaller but in fact it is larger than most other campuses I have visited. It is well worth a visit for any graduate should the opportunity occur.

The Executive Committee meetings still take the same form they did eighteen and more years ago. The weekend begins on a Friday afternoon. This time the focus was on the various means of communication within the organisation. Did you know that there is a page on Facebook and also tweeting on Twitter where everyone can make comments, observations, put invitations or just generally have a grouse about the weather? One area I had not explored previously was the AOUG **Forum** site which I found interesting. Apart from OMEGA, there are so many ways of keeping in touch now which were not available to us as either students or graduands so many years ago.

The Saturday is taken up with the more formal business and it is surprising how much was still so familiar from my last term as Representative. There were reports from the Officers and a session about the AGM, lessons learned and feedback that the event financially had

come in under budget (music to the ears of an ex-accountant). Decisions had to be made about who would be receiving the annual Awards this year and discussing the AOUG presence at the Degree Ceremonies. One of the delights of being involved with AOUG is that one gets invited to Degree Ceremonies. It is wonderful sharing the experiences of welcoming new graduands without having the nerves of being a participant. You can sit on the platform without having to wonder if you would be the only nervous person to fall flat on your face as you walk across the stage – a great feeling. If you are interested in being involved in 2016, then complete the form that will be available in the Winter OMEGA.

When you get your Summer OMEGA you will see that there are some lovely opportunities to meet up with other AOUG members in our Region. Here I must thank Peter Williams who was the previous Executive Representative. He put together much of this programme with the help of Margaret Stobirski our Association Chairman and did a good job throughout his tenure. I know I am in for some good meals and good company at least. I hope you can join us sometime.

I will end this missive with a word of warning. Because no-one stood for Executive Representative this year, I was co-opted **but** only for one year. During this coming year I will be looking for someone to stand prior to the AGM in Buxton next May!! Please consider standing. You will find it a great and rewarding experience.

**Marian Corns** - North West Region 08 Executive Representative

## Diary Dates

### **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August. 7pm**

Meet at “The Stretton Fox” Spark Hall Close, Stretton, Warrington WA4 4NU for an evening meal at 7.30pm with family and friends. [www.vintageinn.co.uk/thestrettonfoxstretton](http://www.vintageinn.co.uk/thestrettonfoxstretton)  
Booking is essential by Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August with the Local Contact.

### **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> September. 11am.**

Meet in the café area on level 2 of the Hat Works Museum, Wellington Mill, Wellington Road South, Stockport SK3 0EU to explore the UK’s only museum of the hatting industry. There is an opportunity to see Victorian hatting machinery and to gain an insight into the hatter’s world. Admission free. Optional guided tour £4.75 (Concessions £3.50). After lunch there is also the opportunity to visit the Staircase House where, with an audio tour, you can learn about Stockport’s oldest house and its rare Jacobean staircase.

### **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October. 7pm.**

Meet inside the entrance area at The Harvester ‘The Sir Winston Churchill’, 710, Bury Road, Rochdale OL11 5HW, for an evening meal at 7.30pm with friends and family. Please come and join us. There is no booking required.

### **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November. 11am**

Meet in the café of the Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 4LA to view one of the best preserved textile mills of the Industrial Revolution, which now houses a museum to the cotton industry complete with a working waterwheel. There are also extension gardens and an Apprentice House. Standard entry to the whole site £12.50. (NT Members free) Car parking £5

### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December. 7pm.**

Meet to share a Christmas Meal. Contact the Executive Representative for details.