



Association of Open University Graduates

Nation 12 - Ireland

Edition 10

November 2016

Local News Summary

Since my last Newsletter our Event in Athlone has taken place. This was intended as an introductory event to take AOUG to areas of Ireland which had been neglected in previous years. Although a good deal of interest had been shown through the response form included with the July Newsletter, numbers were down on the day due to cancellation due to unforeseen events. However, those of us who attended enjoyed a comprehensive tour of the Castle and its grounds. This included being committed to the 'stocks' and dressing up to reflect the characters of Williamite and Jacobite times. The Centre includes a 3D interactive display which takes one through prehistoric life in Ireland, the rise of early Irish families, the story of the Castle and especially the Siege of Athlone.

Afterwards we adjourned to a local Italian restaurant to discuss the way forward for AOUG in Ireland. I will take this up in future issues after completion of events presently diared and an analysis of returned forms. For those of you who haven't responded as yet please feel free to do so by email or hard copy to **AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK17 6AA, email aoug@open.ac.uk**. I am attaching a copy to this Newsletter for your response.

AOUG News

Early in October I attended the AOUG Foundation for Education Research Awards Ceremony at Walton Hall. The Foundation is the AOUG's own charity, funded by donations and interest from investment accounts. As well as Research Awards it funds occasional bursaries and awards for new graduates who have gained their first degree with the OU while overcoming adversity above that of the average student.

Each year nine research awards are available for nomination, named after prominent people in the development of The Open University. Nominations are received from Faculties and Research Centres and they can nominate for any award, recognising research across different disciplines. This year the AOUG 2016 Ted Castle Bursary and four Research Awards were presented.

A further extension of the day was the AOUG Foundation Lecture. This was given by Glenn White, Professor of Astronomy at The Open University. It proved very interesting in exploring the realities of what is known about star formation and research presently being carried out. Following on from here a workshop was held for Executive Committee members on policy and practice within AOUG. On Saturday we got down to the business of receiving Officer's Reports and planning ahead for 2017. More on this will be included in your Winter OMEGA. See below for details of the AGM and Social Weekend. Make sure that

you make your booking to reserve a place. To keep up to date please visit the AOUG Website. www.aoug.org.uk. It is easy to follow and behaves responsively with access to all areas by Region and Nation.

Future Plans

Details of dates, time and place are given at end of Newsletter. The Christmas Event takes place in Belfast organised by our local contact John Ringland. This will give you an opportunity to visit the Christmas Market which has grown in strength in recent years. In January a visit to Swords Castle is being organised by Sean O’Broin. This site encompasses extensive history from 1200 to the present day. So come along and join us so that we can explore this together. In March a Gathering is available in Drumcliffe, Sligo. This is part of my plan to take AOUG to parts of Ireland not previously covered. As you will know this is part of Yeats country. With good road and public transport access this event should be accessible to members who may have had problems in accessing other events. It’s a friendly village with a teashop where we can meet and discuss plans. The church has been restored and the Centre includes an audio-visual presentation, visitor centre and craft shop. Access will also be available to a local art gallery.

Gathering in the North for 2017

The AGM/Social Weekend for 2017 has already been booked with the Blackwell Grange Hotel in Darlington. This means that it is to be in Region 09, the North. It is a long time since the Association weekend was held in Region 09, the last time being situated in Ambleside in the Lake District. Transport links were limited into the Lake District but this time there will be no such issues as we are to visit East of the area, just off the A1 and with its own railway station, Darlington offers easy access either by car or public transport.

The dates booked are 19th – 21st May 2017, so mark this down to note in next year’s diary. Then look out for the article and advert. in the Winter OMEGA which will give you more details. The booking form will be an insert and also available on line for you to complete to reserve your place. Remember that all family and friends are welcome to join you for any, or all, of the weekend, including children, provided they are supervised and you consider the activities age appropriate for them.

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 (after 6.00 pm)
Dublin	Sean O'Broin	22 The Drive, Newtown Hall, Castledown Estate, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.	Ssob3012@gmail.com

Diary Dates

Saturday 9th December, 12.30 pm

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, 11.30 a m

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 Archbishop's 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.

Saturday 12th March 2017, 11.00 a m

Drumcliffe Sligo

Meet at Drumcliffe Tea House and Craft Shop. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. This event will enable us to explore the life and times of W B Yeats who is buried in the village graveyard. Access to the Church and Teach Ban Art Gallery have been agreed as we are visiting out of the normal season. So notification of numbers is desirable. The remains of a Round Tower and High Cross dating from the 11th century are part of a monastic settlement founded by St. Colmcille in the sixth century form part of the village's historic background.

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.....