



## **ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES**

### **Region 03 – SOUTH WEST**

**Edition 13**

**August 2016**

#### **AGM and Social Weekend in Buxton**

Who would have thought that this quiet little Derbyshire Village held such a sad, yet significant, part in the history of the British Isles. The photograph below shows a row of stone cottages in Eyam, the venue for the start of the population devastation that befell the inhabitants. It was here in Eyam that the villagers sacrificed themselves when the plague was discovered. By restricting all passage in or out of the village they prevented the infection spreading with a ring of boundary stones established where the folk from surrounding villages left food and the good people of Eyam deposited money in holes in the rocks, filled with vinegar to disinfect the coins.



The attendees at the Buxton AGM Weekend took a coach out to Eyam and enjoyed an optional guided walk around the various sites in the village and beyond. Some visited the Museum, which explained various aspects of the history, others ventured across the fields to a boundary stone, whilst most restricted themselves to the central part of the village and the church. Although some graves in the churchyard bore victims of the plague, there were also grave stones all over the village adjacent to the houses, as the people were restricted from carrying bodies through the streets. One woman, in a nearby farm, had to single-handedly bury her husband and all of her children, one by one, in a neighbouring field. This may seem like a grim subject for an outing but the weather was kind to us and surrounded by the beautiful Derbyshire countryside, all seemed to really enjoy their visit which was of course rounded off with a visit to the local café for refreshments of various styles.

Many, reflecting on their visit, declared that they wished to return to this sleepy little village to explore further and to visit Eyam Hall and the surrounding craft village.

The other excursions over the weekend were to Poole's Cavern and Chatsworth House and Gardens, both well worth you considering if you are visiting the area. Maybe you might consider joining us at the next AGM from 19<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> May 2017. It is already booked with the Blackwell Grange Hotel in Darlington and more information and a booking form will be available in your Winter OMEGA. This venue is in Region 09, in the North East of England and promises to be just as fascinating an area.

## **Executive Committee Meetings**

Executive Committee Meetings have been held in February, May and July this year and normally the Executive Representative attends to report the opinions of their members and to take part in discussions to shape the Association's future, but unfortunately this year, the South West has no representation. To ensure your area's voice is heard, it is really important that a volunteer is found very quickly to fulfil this role. Could this be you? The next meetings will take place over the first weekends in October '16 and February '17.

## **AOUG Website updated**

As those of you who visit our website regularly will have seen, it has recently undergone some subtle changes. The navigation has been redesigned and the Home Page has seen some updates to layout, including a new dynamic upcoming Events section. The News and OMEGA pages have also been redesigned and we have a new Google Custom Search. However, the most significant changes have occurred behind the scenes 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 out-dated material and tidying up links. If you have not visited the site for a while, now is the time to take a look at [www.aoug.org.uk](http://www.aoug.org.uk) –The Officers would really appreciate your feedback, so please let the AOUG Office know what you think.

### **Vacancy**

There is an immediate vacancy for the position of Executive Representative.

**Would you be willing to be co-opted to serve until May 2017?**

The perfect opportunity to see if this is something for you, with the knowledge you're only committed to next May.

Contact the AOUG Office if you'd like to know more, without committing yourself!

[AOUG@open.ac.uk](mailto:AOUG@open.ac.uk)

**Friday 7th October 2016**

**OU Campus, Michael Young Building, Room 1.**

**AOUG Foundation for Education Research Awards**  
at 12noon

*Followed at 2pm by*

**AOUG Foundation Lecture**  
**"An Astronomer's view of the Birth, the Life and the Death of 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](mailto: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."*

## **Fund raising for the AOUG Foundation for Education charity**

Every year the Association's own charity offers nine Awards to Research students, in their final year, who have been nominated by OU staff from their Faculty or Research Centre and they go forward for consideration to be selected to receive an Award. The successful recipients are then presented with their Awards at a prestigious Ceremony on the OU campus on the first Friday in October. Each Award comprises of a framed certificate and a cheque. All Award amounts are agreed by the Trustees annually.

Occasionally a Bursary is also offered and although they can be nominated by their supervisors as with the Awards, Research Students also have the option to self-nominate. These Bursaries usually offer a monetary Award, in addition to their framed certificate. This money is not to be used as a grant to complete their Research project but it can be used in any way the recipient wishes in order to develop their research further than originally planned, be it extending the area of research, attending a conference, or publishing papers.

AOUG Foundation for Education also funds Awards for new graduates in the Regions and Nations who have gained their first degree whilst overcoming adversity over and above that of the average student. There have been some amazing new graduates nominated for these Awards and during 2015 seventeen such Awards were approved. These new graduates also receive a cheque, along with their framed certificate.

However, in order to continue presenting these Awards each year, AOUG has to ensure that there are sufficient funds to cover them and this is where you come in as these Awards rely on the generosity of you, the members, as it is mainly your donations (with a little help from bank interest) that enables us to continue with this good work.

You will have seen in the Spring OMEGA that we are offering an AOUG 2016 Ted Castle Bursary this year. Ted was an amazing long standing member who remained happy despite extremely adversity and his name has been chosen as symbolic of all the other amazing members who have died over the last twelve months. We invite you to make a special donation of as much as you like, or as little as one pound, in memory of Ted or alternatively, any other sadly missed AOUG member that was dear to your heart. If you wish to assist our work further, you might consider making an annual covenant to help ensure that this good work is able to continue for many more years. Covenant and Gift Aid forms are available from the AOUG Office.

### **Your ideas wanted!**

The annual commitment for these Awards is several thousand pounds and so we are constantly looking for new ways to maintain funds.

Following the Executive Committee meeting in February, the Committee had a workshop to discuss ideas for other ways to raise funds for the AOUG Foundation for Education and we are busy researching all possibilities.

### **Do you have any ideas?**

If so please let us know so we can research your suggestion too.

## Local News

About eighteen of the Exeter group attended a visit to the Mechanical Music Museum in Devon, for a fascinating two hours' talk and demonstration of instruments ranging from a musical snuff box to an incredibly ingenious Welte Vorsetzer. The latter is pushed-up to the keyboard of a conventional piano, whence its eighty wooden 'fingers' play directly upon the piano's keys. In effect, a robotic device actually plays the piano.

**Local Contact for Exeter – Raymond Prescott**

*See Summer OMEGA for full write up.*

## Diary Dates:

### Cornwall Group

Meet in Victoria Inn, Roche, St Austell PL26 8LQ for the Book Club's monthly meeting on the following dates -

**Thursday 19th September. 8pm**

**Thursday 17th October. 8pm**

### Exeter Group

**Wednesday 24th August. 2pm**

Meet at Britannia Royal Naval College, College Way, Dartmouth, Devon, TQ6 0HJ for a private tour (£9 per person). Pre-booking with your Local Contact by Saturday 13th August is essential. Official photographic ID (passport, driving licence or similar) is needed to gain admission as it is a government security requirement. You will need to get there by car or coach – if by car, your vehicle registration number will be needed well in advance.

**Friday 30th September. 12noon**

Meet at the main entrance of the Countess Wear Beefeater Restaurant, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 6HE Pre-booking with your Local Contact is essential.

### Bristol Group

**Thursday 29th September. 12.30pm**

Meet for lunch at the entrance to the White Hart Inn, BS1 2LU, located close to Bristol Bus Station on Lower Maudlin Street (opposite the Eye Hospital). You can access the menu at [www.thewhitehartbristol.co.uk](http://www.thewhitehartbristol.co.uk). If you intend to come, please let your Local Contact know by 23rd September.

## Contact Details

AOUG Office	Office Administrator	AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA	01908 653316 <a href="mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk">aoug@open.ac.uk</a>
Exeter Group	Raymond Prescott		01823 652848 <a href="mailto:jascha231@msn.com">jascha231@msn.com</a>
Cornwall Group	Liz Ashcroft		01872 862425 <a href="mailto:taitailizash@gmail.com">taitailizash@gmail.com</a>
Bristol Group	Pam Day		07810 064676 <a href="mailto:pamday_rsc@btinternet.com">pamday_rsc@btinternet.com</a>