



Association of Open University Graduates

Nation 12 - Ireland

Edition 11

February 2017

What has been happening since the last Newsletter?

In December we met at the Hilton Hotel in Belfast for a festive lunch. This event was organised by our Belfast Local Contact, John Ringland. As attendees were mainly from the local area perhaps next year we should consider holding events in the different provinces so that more people could get together during the festive season.

In January a visit took place to Swords Castle and St Columba's Church of Ireland. This was organised by Sean O'Broin, our Dublin Local Contact. This was a very interesting day with a busy schedule. A full report written by Sean is being included in your Spring OMEGA, so I will leave you in suspense on details.

In February Sean organised a visit to Maynooth in County Kildare. This was a midweek event rather than the usual weekend events. It worked well so in the future we will probably consider a mix dependent on how the rest of the year goes. Again this was a busy schedule, meeting at St. Patrick's College Main Gate. We visited Pugin's Restaurant for light refreshments and to review the plan for the day. Sean had organised a visit to Russell Library where we had a talk on the history of the Library and a scrutiny of some of its displays. After lunch we visited Pugin's Chapel, had a tour of the grounds and those who still had some energy left visited Carton House. The event provided a unique opportunity for us to visit some of the attractions which are not generally available to members of the public. As Sean is presently under pressure on completing a thesis, a full report on this event will be made available later.

Future plans:

On analysis of Response Forms returned from the last mailing, it has become apparent that a number of members find it difficult to attend events for varied reasons, for example, family commitments, health issues or accessibility of events, so perhaps we should develop alternative ways of keeping in touch. One being use of social media which would be OK for those who have got access to systems and feel comfortable with modern information technology. A supporting approach could be use of 'snail' mail or telephone contact. This Newsletter could be used to include items of Member interest. You might like to reminisce on past OU experience, or include stories of personal interest, poems, etc.

The response rate from the mailing was 22%. The main advantage was the updating of email addresses which is much more convenient than copying and posting hard copies.

The following were areas of interest:

- Historic lectures in Belfast
- Events in Ennis or Galway
- Meeting in Enniskillen
- Increased interest in Dublin area events

A further outcome has been a number of lapsed members re-joining. Also one possible local contact for the Fermanagh area.

Plans for the Dublin Area suggested by Sean. Arrangements have not been finalised as yet so if you are interested or would like to put suggestions forward, please get in touch with Sean (see Local Contacts details in the Nation Directory at the end of the Newsletter). Details of websites are included to provide further information:

- Visit to Powerscourt Townhouse, South William Street, Dublin 2, the residence of Richard Wingfield, 3rd Viscount, Powerscourt, 1730 – 1788 and his wife Lady Amelia, who bought the townhouse to entertain guests during the sittings of the Irish Parliament, College Green, before the Act of Union, 1801. See www.powerscourtcentre.ie/tours (Saturdays only).
- Beresford Place designed by James Gandon is a short curving Terrace of five houses built on an axis in 1790 with the central dome of the Custom House clearly visible. One of the houses is open to visitors by prior arrangement. See <http://archiseek.com/2010/1790-Beresford-place-Dublin/>. (Saturdays only during July and August).
- Walking tour of North County Dublin coastline to explore the geological features of the landscape. Lambay Island and Portrane were formed as a result of a volcanic eruption which occurred 450 million years ago. See http://Geoschol.com/Counties/Dublin_Geology.pdf (note underline between Dublin and Geology).
Our guide would be a member of the Open University Geology Society, Ireland Branch. The proposal is to visit either Portrane, Loughinny or Portnarock (weekday during June / July).

Please note all those who participate in events are responsible for their own safety and join entirely at their own risk. You can bring friends and family along including children providing you are able to supervise them and the activity is appropriate to their age.

Association News:

From the February Executive Meeting the Chairman reported that following on from the letter included in your Winter OMEGA, the Officers are working on the relationship with the OU and strategies to ensure the future of AOUG. Nominations, Resolutions and Motions for the AGM are being dealt with and you will receive voting papers with the Spring OMEGA. As I am in post for another year you will not be asked to vote for an Executive Representative for the Nation. The Vice-Chairman attended the OU Students Association Dinner. The Association were formerly known as OUSA but now prefer to be known as the OU Students Association.

The Treasurer reported on the completion of the Audit for the Financial Year ended 31st December 2016. The full record of Accounts will be available at the AGM in Darlington on the 20th May.

Work is continuing on developing the AOUG Website and Social Media. Personally I apologise for falling behind in updating the area allocated to Nation 12 e.g. Welcome Page and News Page.

Discussion took place on the 2018 AGM and Social Weekend being held in the North West, Region 8. Celebrations will be held in October 2018 to commemorate the Pearl Anniversary of AOUG. As 2019 will be a special anniversary for The Open University, it is envisaged that AOUG will be providing some special events over the next two years, so your thoughts on how Nation 12 can be involved would be appreciated.

I hope to see you in Darlington for the AOUG AGM and Social Weekend. An action packed week is promised as you will have noted from inserts with your Winter OMEGA. I am particularly looking forward to the visit to Walworth Castle and its Birds of Prey Display.

Mary Niblett – Executive Representative

Diary Dates:

Saturday 11th March, 11.00 am

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. Please bring along a favourite poem from Yeats and we can have a poetry recital over lunch. Access to the Church and Teach Ban 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 eleventh century are part of a monastic settlement founded by St. Colmcille in the sixth century and form part of the village's historic background.

Thursday 20th April, 11.30 am

Galway City

Meet in Brasserie, Hotel Meyrick, Eyre Square, Galway for morning coffee and time to plan for local contacts and future events. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. Lunch will also be available and a musical interlude from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm. Tickets for the concert are 7 euros booked in advance so please let the Executive Representative know if you would like a ticket. Music by Neasa Ni Bhriain on violin and Kart Rubbel on piano, works by Stanford and Turbin. Alternatives, afternoon tea and/or exploration of many attractions and shopping in Eyre Square.

Friday 26th May, 11.30 am

Armagh City

Meet in the Lounge, The Charlemont Arms Hotel, Armagh. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. We can then explore the areas of historical interest on the Hill, St Patrick's Cathedral (Church of Ireland), Number 5 Vicars Hill – a listed building from 1772 which holds examples of early church records, Christian artefacts, ancient coins, gems, significant prints, collections and curiosities and Armagh Public Library which is the oldest in Northern Ireland, founded in 1771. All three can be arranged as a Group visit at a cost of £6 per person. Lunch can be accessed at Number 4 Vicars Hill. Other attractions within the City can be explored by choice.

Saturday 1st July, 11. 45 am

Newgrange Heritage Site, Donore, County Meath.

Meet at Bru na Boinne Visitors Centre for the Newgrange Heritage Site. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. As access to the Newgrange Monument is only by guided tour and can only be booked on the day on a first come first served basis, prior notice to the Executive Representative is essential. Cost to Seniors/small groups (less than 15) is 6 euros each. Parking space is available but only limited public transport via Dublin/Drogheda. A Taxi service could be arranged dependent on numbers. Guests of Members are welcome, as is AOUG policy for all events.

Nation 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

Please indicate your interest in events by reply slip or email to Contacts as given in the Directory:

I will be attending the following Event:

Saturday, 11th March Drumcliffe.....

Thursday, 20th April Galway Event.....

Friday, 26th May Armagh City.....

Saturday 1st July Newgrange Heritage Centre.....

I am interested in Dublin Events.....