



Association of Open University Graduates Region 09 - North

EDITION 8

SPRING 2016

Local News

Welcome to all AOUG members. Spring like poetry makes us humble according to Annie Finch, writing for the Poetry Foundation. It is a time for renewal and celebration and serves as a reminder of our powerlessness over creation. Many poets have “waxed lyrical” about poetry’s enriching nature. Margaret Walker observed spring as a homecoming:

“my Mississippi Spring-
My warm loving heart a-fire
with early greening leaves---

A.E. Housman (1859-1936) described the magical qualities of the cherry tree:

“Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide- - -

We have reached that important time of the year where plans are made and opportunities are presented that may allow us all to enjoy the fine weather and absorb the delights of the changing seasons. Some members may be interested in visiting Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle for a major exhibition entitled, “Burning Belief” featuring over fifty paintings, drawings and etchings by renowned artist, Anthony Clark (A.R.C.A). He is a Sunderland artist and has been holding one-man shows and exhibitions for the last forty years with his works being represented in various public and private collections including those of President Carter, Cardinal Hume and L.S. Lowry. This exhibition focuses on work inspired by his “pilgrimages” to cathedrals in France and Italy and travels to Spain, Malta, Crete, Morocco, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

Also, a visit to a major new exhibition to celebrate the concept of the “English Rose” has been planned for early June at the same location. The exhibition’s themes are centred on how the artists from Van Dyck to Sargent represented feminine beauty from the 17th to the 20th Century. One of the finest female portraits depicting Olivia, Mrs Endymion Porter by court painter Van Dyck in 1637, when the artist was at the height of his career, will be displayed.

Also, a painting of Mrs Sarah Siddons the outstanding “tragic” actress of her time famous for her dramatic portrayal of Lady Macbeth will be included. It was reported that Gainsborough was experiencing difficulties with her nose, which led him to exclaim “Confound the nose, there’s no end to it”.

There are many interesting and worthwhile experiences to be gained within our region. A recent visit to the Sunderland Glass Centre in March, which is famous for its rich heritage of glass making that dates back to 674 AD, provided inspiration for further research. Historically, Benedict Biscop founder of Wearmouth-Jarrow Priory brought skilled craftsmen from Gaul to create the first stained glass window in England for St Peter’s Church in Monkwearmouth. This was the beginning of a revolution as craftsmen at the famous Hartley Wood glassworks whose glass adorns churches and great buildings all over the world using the same hand-blown techniques and vivid, individual colour mixing until the end of the 20th Century. Significantly, after the Second World War the Wear Flint Glass Works, known as James A. Jobling produced a range of Pyrex ware which became a huge hit with housewives. It was taken over in 1973 by the American firm Corning.

Further developments could be attributed to Stanley Donald Stookey an American inventor who was research director at Corning Glass for forty-seven years, whose discoveries led to several inventions. FotoForm glass was one of Stookey’s earliest innovations which is used in computer manufacturing and communications technology. He accidentally created the first glass-ceramic, Fotoceram, later known as Pyrocera, which eventually led to the development of CorningWare in 1957. This glass has specific properties to be used by the military for the nose cones of supersonic radar domes in guided missiles applied in defence. Stookey also developed photochromic glass which is a glass used to make ophthalmic lenses darken in bright light.

Jean McKenna – Executive Representative

Association News

AGM Weekend in Buxton, Derbyshire

Members, friends and family are to meet at the Palace Hotel, in Buxton, Derbyshire on Friday 13th to Sunday 15th May, for this year’s AGM/Social Weekend. This hotel, completed in 1868 was one of a number of grand hotels built at a time when visitors, arriving by train, were attracted to see the famous Crescent financed by the 5th Duke of Devonshire. Our hotel, perched on top of a hill, affords great views over the very centre of the town and maintains an air of opulence and splendour very obvious as soon as you enter the building. Through constant upgrading the standard of maintenance is very high.

Excursions during the weekend visit Poole Cavern, Chatsworth House and Gardens and Eyam. The latter is the famous little Derbyshire village, where inhabitants sacrificed themselves to the plague to prevent it spreading to surrounding villages. There is also a trip around Buxton itself for non-members on Saturday morning when members are busy with the official meetings.

There is no charge for anyone just wanting to attend the AGM meeting but you must still book with the AOUG Office so that a voting card can be prepared for you. For further details see the Winter OMEGA, which had a full article and advert about the weekend, or ring the AOUG Office on 01908 653316.

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 for £300. 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 of £1,000 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 received £100 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 see in the Spring OMEGA that we are offering an AOUG 2016 Ted Castle Bursary this year and you can therefore make a special donation of as much as you like, or as little as one pound, in the memory of Ted or any other deceased AOUG member that was dear to your heart. Or you might consider making an annual covenant to help ensure that this good work is able to continue for many more years.

Members' Feedback

If you would like any questions or opinions raised at the Executive Committee on your behalf please let me know. I am here to represent you.

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Local Contact

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Name : PI number

Tel: E-mail address:

I enclose a donation of stamps to receive my Newsletter by post

I enclose an article on a local issue for the next Newsletter

Diary Dates

Thursday 21st April 1:45 pm

Meet at the entrance to Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, Teesdale, County Durham, DL12 8NP. Join renowned artist Anthony Clark A.R.C.A to learn about his exhibition entitled, “Burning Belief” which features over fifty paintings, drawings and etchings by the artist. The exhibition focuses on work inspired by cathedrals in France and Italy; atmosphere is used in his paintings to capture belief whilst a strong sense of space creates brilliant, icon-like imagery.

Saturday 7th May 1 pm

Meet at the main entrance to Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum located near the town of Stanley in County Durham, DH9 0RG. Enjoy a journey back into the everyday life of urban and rural North East England at the zenith of industrialisation in the early 20th Century. Take a stroll through the 1913 town area which depicts Victorian Buildings in an evolved setting including the Annfield Plain Co-operative Store; a terrace of “professionals” houses (from Gateshead) and much more.

Saturday 4th June 1 pm

Meet at the entrance to Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, Teesdale, County Durham, DL12 8NP. Enjoy a major exhibition entitled, English Rose - Feminine Beauty from Van Dyck to Sargent to celebrate the concept of the “English Rose” and four hundred years of society beauties. One of the finest female portraits will be on display by court painter Van Dyck which depicts Olivia, Mrs Endymion Porter a lady-in-waiting to Queen Henrietta Maria. The portrait was painted in 1637 at the height of the artist’s career and displays the “careless romance” that is evident in many of Van Dyck’s images. Other paintings will be featured alongside two Van Dyck’s including Gainsborough, Reynolds, George Romney, John Singer Sargent and Peter Lely.

I/we will be attending the visit to Bowes Museum

I/we will be attending the visit to Beamish Open Air Museum
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I should like to know more about being a Local Contact