



Flag of Oxfordshire

## Association of Open University Graduates Region 02 – The South

Newsletter 20

June 2017

### Welcome

If you are a new member to the Association of Open University Graduates, welcome! Please enjoy reading about the social activities that have taken place in the Portsmouth and Oxford areas recently. I would like to say thanks to all those who voted for me I hope to continue the good work of my predecessors that include Colin and Mike, our local contacts. I wish to thank Jayne for her support and good luck as she takes on her new role in the East of England. As you can see we have a busy programme of events for the rest of the year and we hope that many of you will enjoy what we have put together and that we may see some of you in the coming months. If members have an idea for an event, then please get in contact with me and we will see what we can do.

### Recent events

#### Portsmouth & South Downs Area



Mike Bechley pulling a pint at Ringwood Brewery  
Photo courtesy of Mike Bechley.

A large group from the Portsmouth area joined to take a tour of Ringwood Brewery. Beer has been brewed in the town of Ringwood since the medieval period when men first mixed the crystal clear water of the River Avon with the malted barley harvested from the surrounding fields.

Of more recent times, Ringwood Brewery was founded in 1978 by Peter Austin, a man revered as "the father of British Micro-brewing". Formerly a bakery in the old station yard the brew house served a handful of customers. 1979 saw the production of Old Thumper that has since become the flagship brew for Ringwood. In 1986, the brewery moved to its current site, ironically the location of a brewery that ceased trading in 1821. Today the brewery is able to produce around forty thousand barrels of its renowned and distinctive beers.

Before being taken through the process of production the group tried the beers in the visitor's pub. Although the group visited on a day when production was not taking place, a look inside the fermentation vats was not to be missed. The brewery was really interesting to see and the visit was enjoyed with another drink in a complimentary glass that finished the visit off well!

## Oxford and Area

Many of us, including two members from London, gathered for our February event to visit the *Volcanoes* exhibition in the Bodleian Library's Weston entrance at the University of Oxford on Broad Street. The exhibition discussed our relationship with volcanoes including the scientific side.

One of the earliest recorded eye witness accounts to these geological events was Pliny the Younger who described the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 in a series of letters. In more recent times this volcano continued to erupt on and off between 1631 and 1944. Back in the early fifteenth century Cristoforo Buondelmonti an Italian monk travelled around the Greek Islands. In his *Book of Islands* the volcano of Nisyros is described "as a mountain that day and night pours out sulphurous fires from subterranean pathways". More recently one of the nineteenth century's most remarkable explorers was Isabella Bird, who in 1872 spent six months climbing the active volcanoes of Kilauea and Mauna Loa in Hawaii. On the scientific front, scientists can now track movements of molten rock at depth through analysing the sounds of a volcano and by measuring the vibrations generated by the many small earthquakes made underneath. Furthermore the amount of heat and the composition of the escaping gases also tell scientists how close the magma is to the surface and consequently the chances of a new eruption. After our visit many of us went for lunch at The Mitre on the High Street.

Our now traditional Spring equinox walk around Christchurch Meadows was held on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March, four days early, but it attracted half a dozen of us including the Executive Rep for Region 01, Rosemary Hammick, who this May came to the end of her term of office.

While the weather that day wasn't the warmest (it was the week where one day was warm and the next cold) we all enjoyed a good walk around the Thames seeing the daffodils.



Afterwards we retired to The Mitre some having the cream tea as advertised while others tucked into something more substantial such as fish and chips.

The River Thames at Christchurch Meadows Oxford.  
Photo courtesy Linda Rooker.

A warm sunny day walking along the Kennet and Avon Canal was enjoyed by all who went to Hungerford on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April. Looking at the canal boats going by we had a good chat about studies and holidays working up an appetite that was subsequently fulfilled by a hearty lunch back at the Three Swans Hotel where we had started our seven mile long walk. Alongside the Kennet just outside the boundary of Hungerford is Freeman's Marsh that dates back to 1550. Carefully managed since then cattle now graze the land as a way of maintaining it. The area on the north side of this waterway was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) back in 1986. The Kennet and Avon dates back to 1810.

## **This Year's AOUG Foundation Lecture**

At 2pm on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2017, at The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, Tamsin Waterkeyn will be delivering the AOUG Foundation Lecture. Tamsin, an Open University postgraduate student, is currently researching for a Doctorate in Education whilst working full time in Saudi Arabia. The subject of her lecture is “The Socio-Cultural Impact of Globalisation and English in Saudi Arabia: A Narrative Enquiry”.

This promises to be a very interesting and informative lecture deserving of full support and, for those who have not been to the campus in recent years, it also gives the opportunity to see how things have changed. Members who have not been to one of the Lectures before will be particularly welcome. Admission is by ticket only at a cost of £10.00 which also includes a buffet lunch, tickets available from AOUG Office – [aoug@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk) or by phone 01908 653316 before 8<sup>th</sup> September.

## **Foundation Funding**

Every year, the AOUG Foundation for Education offers nine Research Awards and fourteen Awards for new graduates who have overcome adversity to obtain their degrees. You will have read about previous winners in OMEGA. The Awards for 2017 have been advertised and soon the nominations will be coming in. However, this year there is real concern that there will be insufficient funds to cover them.

As in the past, interest from investments has been added to your donations and at our recent AGM in Darlington, we were pleased to receive money from the raffle and the piggy bank (which is on display wherever possible). However, this is still unlikely to be enough.

These Awards are highly regarded by The Open University and we are proud to be able to acknowledge what its students have achieved. Please consider sending a donation to AOUG Office if you can spare it. Cheques should be made payable to “AOUG Foundation for Education Limited” and sent to AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA. Payment can also be made by phone 01908 653316 or by annual covenant (please request a form). Thank you.

## **Associate Membership**

The AGM 2017 at Darlington has overwhelmingly voted to allow friends and relations to join our organisation as Associate Members. They will not have any voting rights or be able to join our Executive Committee, however they are very welcome to receive the OMEGA and Newsletters and join our organisation to benefit from our social activities. Previously at the AGM in 2016 we have allowed Students from the OU to join us. The cost is £20 per year (£24 for Continental Europe and £28 for the rest of the world), the same as a full member. They have to be nominated by a full member of AOUG. So let's welcome as many people as we can to allow our organisation to grow in strength.

We have had a great deal of interest and have already had Associate Membership applications, so please spread the word. Please request Associate membership forms from the AOUG Office 01908 653316 [aoug@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk)

## Future events

### Portsmouth & South Downs Area

#### **Wednesday 14th June at 11.00am.**

Visit to Whitchurch Silk Mill, 28 Winchester Street, Whitchurch, RG28 7AL. Meet by the main entrance. The Silk Mill is the oldest of its type in the United Kingdom, with the original water wheel, Victorian machinery and looms. The Mill is 15 minutes' walk from Whitchurch Railway Station, and buses 76 and 86 (somewhat irregular) pass nearby. Admission is £4.50. Lunch is at the Bell Inn nearby after the visit.

#### **Wednesday 5 July at 11.00am.**

Meet for coffee at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road, Portsmouth, PO3 5HS, to discuss the agenda for the rest of 2017.

#### **Wednesday 13 September at 11.00am.**

Meet for coffee at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road, Portsmouth, PO3 5HS. Ample free parking, with lunch available afterwards for those who may wish to stay.

#### **Saturday 14 October at 10.15am.**

Meet at the entrance to Winchester College, College Street, Winchester, SO23 9NA for the college tour at 10.30am.

Founded in 1382, Winchester College is believed to be the oldest continuously running school in the country. The tour concentrates on the mediaeval heart of the College, and includes Chamber Court; the 14th century Gothic Chapel (with one of the earliest examples of a wooden vaulted roof, and two separate organs); College Hall, the original Scholars' dining room; School, the seventeenth century redbrick schoolroom and the original mediaeval cloister. The cost is £6. Car parking is limited around the college, which is 15 minutes' walk from Winchester Station, and about 10 minutes from the city centre. The tour lasts about 100 minutes, and then we adjourn for lunch in the city centre.

#### **Wednesday 15 November at 11.00am.**

Meet for coffee at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road, Portsmouth, PO3 5HS.

#### **Saturday 25 November at 10.15am.**

Meet at the west door to Salisbury Cathedral, The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EJ, for the 10.30 tour. The cost is £7.50, or for the energetic, £12.50 for the Tower Tour (involving climbing 332 steps to just over half-way up the Spire). One of the 4 remaining copies of the Magna Carta is on view in the Chapter House.

There is limited parking nearby in Old George Mall or Lush House; the cathedral is less than 10 minutes' walk from the railway station and bus stops.

#### **Wednesday 10 January 2018 at 12.00 noon.**

Meet for our annual lunch at the Toby Carvery, details as above. There is no need to book, but if possible please advise the Portsmouth local contact before Christmas if you intend to come.

### Oxford and Area

#### **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June at 1.00pm.**

Meet at the main entrance to Bletchley Park to find out more about the home to British codebreaking and the first computers. Visit what is often regarded as the best kept secret of World War II. Meet by the entrance. Entry is £17.25 with a £2 discount for seniors.

Advance tickets are £16 and available at [www.bletchleypark.org.uk](http://www.bletchleypark.org.uk). Located on Sherwood Drive, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK3 6EB.

#### **Friday 28th July at 1.45pm.**

Blackwell's Literary Walking Tour; "Jane Austen in Oxford". The tour departs from just inside Blackwell's Bookshop, 48-53 Broad Street, Oxford OX1 3BQ. To book the tour, that costs £9 per person (concessions £8), contact Blackwell's on 01865 333602, or by email at [oxford@Blackwells.co.uk](mailto:oxford@Blackwells.co.uk), or in person at the Bookshop.

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August at 12.00 noon.**

Meet in The Bell, Market Square, Aylesbury, HP20 1TX, for coffee and/or lunch. There will be a copy of OMEGA on the table. It will be lovely to meet some new faces.

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August at 12:30pm.**

Enjoy a 'Vintage Themed Afternoon Tea Cruise' with Hobbs of Henley ([www.hobbsofhenley.com/vintage-afternoon-tea-cruise](http://www.hobbsofhenley.com/vintage-afternoon-tea-cruise)). Meet between pier 2 and pier 3 on the River Thames near the Hobbs of Henley office on Station Road / Thameside in Henley RG9 1AZ at 12.30hrs to take the cruise that lasts 3 hours embarking at 13:00hrs. Cost £26.00 for adults, £17.50 for children. Please book and pay online. When booking please ensure you state that you are with AOUG so Hobbs know how many there are of us so that we can be seated together. Also let me David Cox know. This will be an ideal time to celebrate if you have passed your exams. Please allow plenty of time to get into Henley and find parking. Trains to Henley only come from Twyford and run every hour. Buses; from High Wycombe and Reading take the Arriva 800, Wallingford take the Thames Travel 139B.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September at 11.00am.**

A visit to The Vyne National Trust property, Vyne Road, Sherborne St John, lying between the A33 and A340 just a few miles north of Basingstoke. Meet at the entrance to the whole property adjacent to Visitor Reception. This mansion was home to Lord William Sandys, Lord Chamberlain to Henry VIII. Now only a third of its size it is still an impressive site. There will be the opportunity to view the major restoration of the roof via the scaffolding, walkway and lift. Though the first floor will be closed, many items of furniture and ceramics will be on display on the ground floor. The property boasts woodlands wetlands and an 18<sup>th</sup> century walled garden. Standard admission is £11.75 for adults, £5.90 for children. Trains; these run every half an hour in both directions from Reading and Basingstoke to Bramley Station that is 2 miles away. Buses; from Basingstoke take the Stagecoach 2, 22 or 14 their nearest stop being about 1 mile from The Vyne.

**Thursday 21st September at 11.15am.**

Meet at the Bodleian Library, Weston entrance, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BG, for coffee. Afterwards visit the Bodleian Library's Jane Austen Exhibition. This should be of particular interest to those who went on the Blackwell's walking tour in July.

**Saturday 14th October at 12.00 noon.**

The Autumn Lunch is to be held at The Mitre, corner of Turl Street with the High Street, Oxford, OX1 4AG. Members and friends from any Region or Nation will be welcome to join us. If you would like to attend, please contact Colin Reed as he will need to reserve a table.

**Thursday 16th November at 11.15am.**

Meet at the Bodleian Library, Weston entrance, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BG, for coffee. Afterwards visit the Museum of the History of Science, just across the road. Entry is free.

**Thursday 14th December at 11.15am.**

Coffee morning is in the Ashmolean Museum's rooftop café, Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX1 2PH. It is anticipated that the annual Oxford Christmas Market will be taking place in nearby Broad Street.

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