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**Association of Open University Graduates  
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Hello to you all. I hope that you have enjoyed a pleasant summer and are now ready for the change in temperature. I am sure that for some of you in warmer climates there is not such a great change as we experience in northern Europe but whatever, the end of 2017 is drawing to a close so I take this opportunity to wish you all a wonderful New Year.

AOUG has been very busy recently with the annual AOUG for Education Research Awards held at The Open University at Milton Keynes in October. This year there were no less than seven awards presented which I think is the most in the history of AOUG. Obviously the university's Deans and recipients' supervisors appreciate the recognition of the work being carried out at the university which is acknowledged by fellow graduates. Also there was the annual AOUG Foundation Lecture, this year given by Tamsin Waterkeyn, a former AOUG bursary recipient. Entitled, The Socio-cultural Impact of Globalisation and English in Saudi Arabia, the lecture was well worth the trip to meet up with other members and university personnel. Read all about this excellent event in OMEGA which is due out soon.

Once again it is time to get your diary out and make a note of the next AOUG AGM and Social Weekend which will be celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of AOUG in 2018. The weekend will be held in Rochdale, Lancashire, on Friday 18th to Sunday 20th May.

Recently on British television there was a programme celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of Milton Keynes. For those of you who have not been there, it is a very modern place with a grid system of roads and over 250 roundabouts. It is not the easiest of places to drive around, even locals can get lost! The programme went through all of the different aspects of the development, streets, housing, government and education. There was, of course, a small slot given over to The Open University and there was a glimpse of AOUG's founder Olga Camm which considering all the areas to cover in the programme, was very rewarding to see.

Moving on to what we in Europe have been up to, I enclose in this Newsletter the last of your contributions to our list of the Seven Wonders of the World, (sites created within the last 200 years). Depending on how you view the list, we either have five sites or eight sites, but what does it matter, they are all worthy for their inclusion in the list. It is interesting to note that two are still in construction, but viewed by many as being extraordinary as they stand today. Read on to find out what I am writing about.

Patricia Cowling

## The Three Firth of Forth Bridges

The three bridges represent the pinnacle of engineering from three centuries, and they sit side by side crossing the Firth of Forth, thus connecting the Lothians with Fife. All three bridges will be used by commuters as well as holidaymakers, as many people now live in Fife and work in Edinburgh and vice versa. The rail bridge was opened in 1890, named as a listed building in 1973, owned by Network Rail, is 2.46 km long and carries about two hundred trains a day, both local and long distance. This is probably the quickest method to and from central Edinburgh.

The Forth Road Bridge was opened in 1964 to replace a ferry service linking North and South Queensferry. When I was a boy we frequently used the ferry when we were camping in Perthshire. The bridge is 2.5 km in length and became toll free in 2008. Now that the Queensferry Crossing has been opened, the Forth and goods vehicles Road Bridge will be mainly used by public transport, so is a more flexible means of travel than the train service.

The most recent of the three bridges is the Queensferry crossing which opened in August this year. At 2.7 km long it is the longest three tower cable stayed bridge in the world. It will mainly be used by private cars, so will mean that drivers should not be delayed by goods traffic. Unlike the Forth Road Bridge, the Queensferry Crossing has been designed to cope with strong cross winds, so should not be subject to closure in adverse weather conditions. Photos licensed under Creative Commons



The Road Bridge by Karl Williams.

Railway Bridge by Billy McCourt

Queensferry by Deborah

Robert Girling

## Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Monument to Chief Crazy Horse

Carved into the granite face of Mount Rushmore, South Dakota, USA, the memorial consists of sculptures of President George Washington, President Thomas Jefferson, President Theodore Roosevelt and President Abraham Lincoln. The presidents were selected for their significant contribution to the founding and unification of the country.

The original idea of the monument was conceived by Doane Robinson to promote tourism in the region and today it is estimated that three million people visit the site annually. The Danish

American sculptor, Gutzon Borglum, was enlisted to help with the project and the selection of the site. Construction of the monument began in 1927 and was completed in 1939. Originally the sculptures were to show from the head to the waist of each president but lack of funds restricted the sculptures to heads only.

Not far away from Mount Rushmore, a monument to Chief Crazy Horse is in construction. Started in 1948 work continues and if ever finished could be the world's largest sculpture. The Sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski, who also worked for a short time on the Mount Rushmore site, was the first sculptor to work on the Crazy Horse Memorial. The finished sculpture will show Chief Crazy Horse riding a horse and pointing into the distance. Crazy Horse was a Native American war leader who fought against the US Federal Government on several occasions, trying to protect the territories and way of life of the Lakota people.



Mount Rushmore by Sebastian Bergmann  
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Chief Crazy Horse by Snuffys  
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The Mount Rushmore project was funded by the Federal Government but the Chief Crazy Horse Monument is funded by The Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation and will probably take several years before it is finished.

Nominated by a member in Europe

### **La Sagrada Familia**

Situated in Barcelona, Spain, La Sagrada Familia is one of Antoni Gaudi's most famous works. Construction started in 1882, under the direction of architect Francisco de Paula de Villar y Lozano. However, after just one year he resigned his position and Gaudi took over. The building has yet to be completed. Gaudi remained working on the project until his death in 1926. Since then the supervision of the work has passed through several hands, obviously due to the length of time it is taking to finish.

After taking over, Gaudi immediately made changes to the plans. He wanted the Basilica to reflect the link between heaven and earth and consequently his plans were very grand. The eighteen towers, and the Tower of Jesus Christ in particular, reflect Gaudi's vision and stands at 172.5 metres above ground level. Owing to modifications which Gaudi often requested, it is difficult today to know exactly how he would want the finished building to look. There is a contrast in the stone colour between the front and the back of the building and the style of construction varies. However, it remains an arresting building with its soaring towers, competing for the sky line with the huge cranes required for the ongoing work. The fact that it is a functioning church and an important tourist attraction gives credit to Gaudi's design. Importantly, parts of La Sagrada Familia are on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Nominated by Carole Fogg

The final list is as follows:

The Three Gorges Dam of the Yangtze River	China
La Sagrada Familia	Spain
Mount Rushmore National Memorial and Monument to Chief Crazy Horse	USA
The Three Firth of Forth Bridges	Scotland
The Eden Project	England

Thank you to those of you who have contributed. I know that all members could add to this list making it a very long, 'Seven Wonders of the World'.

## **The Trials and Tribulations of Modern Communication Technology**

I often find it very frustrating when, with the click of a key, my laptop information goes flying off in a completely different direction to the one I asked for. It is easy for me to think, 'oh, it's me', but I have been using the Internet and e mails since they became available. My confidence was restored the other day when a French friend told me that she felt like throwing her laptop out of the window. One minute it is doing exactly what it should do, i.e. following her commands, and then off it goes in a completely different direction. I know that it is very easy to click the wrong button, but the fault can be rectified with ease, apparently.

When searching the web for a specific subject it is amazing how many options appear but quite often, mixed in with these options are subjects not necessarily related to the subject I am looking for. But, and this is a big BUT, when I use Google UK, the results often come up in French. "Pourquoi?" I ask. Yes, I know, computers know better than me and because I live in France I must want it in French. If I want it in French I can use Google France I tell it! One thing I am very good at and that is having a conversation with equipment!

I have had occasions when members have e mailed me to say that something in the Newsletter has arrived upside down. A quick check on my system confirms that the item left my system the correct way up, but something had happened when it was flying at megabit seconds across the air to upset it. Naughty, is my reaction.

Having had my little moan about modern technology I have to admit, where would I be without it? I can contact friends across the world without having to use the telephone at extra expense, I can store information for later use, I can check the bank account, I can look up information on any subject etc. and every so often, send for our computer man to upgrade us. Now, here comes the next problem. I am not always sure that the upgrade programme is as good as that which was installed before the change. Well, eventually it is, it is just a case of learning the new system.

Several years ago I went to an 'old girl's' reunion at my junior school. I remember the head teacher telling us about the changes in education and how important computers had become. She gave a very good piece of advice. "If you want to know how to use the computer or put something right, ask my youngest pupil." The age range for that school was from three to eleven so that was telling us something.

My husband and I use computer programmes for a variety of things, from typing and printing material for our business, for my husband in particular, for typing in his musical compositions for a variety of instruments and for me, yes, you have guessed, to do this Newsletter.