



Association of Open University Graduates Nation 12 – Ireland

Edition 13

October 2017

What has been happening since the last Newsletter?

The planned visit to Newgrange Heritage Site in July proved difficult to coordinate as sufficient information to facilitate bookings was not received in advance. However, it was an interesting experience and well worth a return visit so perhaps this is something which can be taken up again in 2018.

In August a visit to The National Concert Hall was organised by local Contact for the Dublin area, Sean O’Broin. This was the last of the Summer Lunchtime Series by the RTE Concert Orchestra and broadcast live on RTE’s classical music channel, Lyric FM. The programme included compositions from Copland, Barber and Marquez, conducted by Gavin Maloney. Of particular interest was the delivery on the clarinet by Christopher Moriarty Pearson who was the winner of the Irish Freemason’s Musician of the Year award in 2016.

In September we visited Enniskillen Castle in County Fermanagh. This is the home of both the County Museum and the Inniskillings Museum. The County Museum covers the prehistory and natural history of Fermanagh through award winning exhibitions relative to the County’s traditional rural life and local crafts including Belleek Pottery. Historically the building was the stronghold of the Gaelic Maguire Chieftains. It was later used as a Plantation Castle and in more modern times as military barracks. The Inniskillings Museum contains a collection of uniform, weapons, medals and memorabilia dating back to the 17th Century. It explores Fermanagh’s unique wartime history during the Second World War.

In the afternoon we visited Castle Coole which is built in parkland overlooking Lough Coole. A guided tour of the house provided us with an in-depth insight to its neo-classical design by James Wyatt, which took ten years to complete. The State Bedroom was said to have been prepared for a visit by George IV in 1821 although the visit never took place. In contrast to the opulent lifestyle lived upstairs we had the opportunity of experiencing life below stairs. This was where maids, butlers and servants lived and worked. The area has been recently restored so gave us an insight to the kitchens, wine cellar, servants’ hall and service tunnel where goods were brought to and from the house.

Future plans:

In my first newsletter as an Executive Representative (July 2016) I set two goals, one being gaining feedback from members on their interests and how they would like AOUG in Ireland to progress. I sent out a Response Form to get your views and I reported on this in my

Newsletter, February 2017. Moving from this I am attaching a more in-depth survey to this Newsletter.

My second commitment was to obtain Local Contacts in the Midlands, West and North-West Areas. To further this commitment, I set out to organise events in these areas which had been neglected previously. We have since had events in Galway, Athlone, Drumcliffe and Enniskillen along with a planned visit to Derry in April. We now have a Local Contact in Enniskillen who will cover the immediate area.

As my term of office expires in May 2018 I hope that Members will come forward to take my place. A form for Nominees will be included with your Winter OMEGA which is due for distribution mid-December. For forthcoming events please see the Diary Dates. I would especially draw your attention to the meeting in Waterford on Saturday 28th October. This was where I met with Jean and Ramsey Hertzog and enlisted as a Local Contact for the Munster Area back in 2013. So, let us take this opportunity to have an open discussion on plans for the future.

Provincial Arms of Ireland
Setanta Saki CC-BY-SA-3.0

Association News

2018 AGM

Next year's AGM/Social Weekend is to be held in the Greater Manchester area at at The Norton Grange Hotel and Spa, Castleton, Rochdale from 18th to 20th May 2018. This will be our thirtieth Anniversary year, so why not join us to mark this very special event. Booking forms will be available in the Winter edition of OMEGA or via the AOUG website at www.aoug.org.uk. There will be optional visits to Robinsons Brewery and the Hat Works, and a walk around Media City/The Lowry. If you don't know this area, why not explore while you're there, or just take advantage of the spacious hotel facilities. The weekend is open to all AOUG Members and your family and friends, as well as any interested OU Graduates, OU students and OU Staff.

Ideas for Fund Raising

We are always looking to find ways to increase the funds for our Charity. A member had a Coffee and Cake Day which raised over £100. How about a Car Boot, Sponsored Walks, selling unwanted items on eBay or filling Smartie boxes with pennies, 20p pieces or even pound coins! This idea recently resulted in 63 one pence pieces, £4.25 in five pence pieces, £5.50 in ten pence pieces and £12.20 in twenty pence pieces - £22.58!

Members' News

Visit to Maynooth:

During a visit to Maynooth earlier this year the Group adjourned for lunch to the beautifully restored Pugin designed restaurant which originally accommodated five hundred seminarians. Afterwards we visited the great architectural masterpiece, the Pugin Chapel (featured recently by Michael Portillo in his Great Railway Journeys of the World series on BBC 2 television). St Mary's Square was designed by A W Pugin in the 1840s during the era of the Gothic Revival, but due to lack of available funds (£30,000, equivalent to c.£3 million) at the time, the chapel and Aula Maxima (great hall) were not completed. The construction of the chapel

was delayed due to the Great Famine (1845); the foundation stone was not laid until 1875 with the completion of the building (1881). The architectural design of the chapel was completed by J J McCarthy who was prevented from using Pugin's thirteenth-century design because of legal constraints.

The Gothic style deployed by McCarthy was innovative and different in several aspects from traditional Gothic architecture of the time. The layout of the chapel is most unusual, lacking the traditional nave and transepts that prevail in most English Gothic churches. The church is twenty-two feet long being the largest choir chapel in the world containing four hundred and fifty-four carved oak choir stalls, row upon row of seats facing across the aisle rather than towards the altar. The chapel is adorned with wooden sculptures and stained glass windows of Irish and German origin. The magnificent Rose Window by Westlake in the organ loft demonstrates Westlake's skill in its colour and detail, depicting Christ the King in glory holding the orb of the Universe. The ceiling is decorated with medallions of angels and saints. Another particularly interesting feature of the chapel is the very colourful set of Stations of the Cross which are painted on canvas. The organ was constructed by the German organ builder George Stahlhuth in Aachen (Aix la Chapelle) in 1889. The organ was dismantled and restored by insertion of replacement pipework by Fratelli Ruffatti of Padua, Italy (2013). It now consists of over three thousand pipes, a Herald Trumpet and a novelty set of twelve bells, and the Zimbelstern with its rotating stars, which is a very impressive and distinctive feature when the instrument is being played during the annual carol service at Christmastime.

Sean O Broin – Local Contact Dublin area (*A further visit to Maynooth can be arranged for February. So if interested please contact Sean or myself so that it can be circulated to Members and included on the Website.*)

Mary Niblett - Executive Representative

Diary Dates:

Saturday 28th October. 11.30am

Waterford Viking Trail

We meet at Dooley's Hotel Restaurant, The Quay, Waterford. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. After a cup of coffee we follow the Viking Trail which takes us to the Bishop's Palace, the Medieval Museum and Waterford Crystal where a guided tour can be booked at a cost of 10 euros. Reginald's Tower can be climbed by those agile enough to take on the steps. Afterwards we can adjourn for refreshments and plan for the year ahead.

Saturday 9th December. 12noon

Festive Christmas Lunch in Belfast

We meet in the Foyer of the Hilton Hotel, 4 Lanyon Place, Belfast City. John will be carrying a copy of OMEGA. The hotel is close to Belfast Central Railway Station, bus services and shopping. The Continental Market in the City Square has grown from strength to strength in recent years.

Saturday 20th January 2018. 11.00 am

Ulster Museum

We meet in Museum Café, Ulster Museum, Botanic Gardens, Belfast. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. The Museum offers a variety of displays from art, science and history,

taking you across Ireland and all parts of the globe. There is 8,000 square metres of public display space which includes the Game of Thrones Tapestry. Guided tours are available so all tastes can be catered for. Weather permitting the Botanic Gardens can be included in your itinerary. Admission is free and there is ample car parking available.

Saturday 10th March 11.00 am

The Crawford Municipal Art Gallery, Cork

We meet in the Gallery Café, Emmet Place, Cork. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. During a previous visit to Cork we had insufficient time to explore the Gallery fully. So this is an opportunity to explore the extensive collections available encompassing historical and contemporary Irish and international art. There is usually a programme of temporary exhibitions also available. Admission is free. The Gallery is in the heart of the City with access to shops and other attractions. Train, Bus and Parking facilities are within close proximity.

Saturday 21st April 11.00 am

Londonderry City Attractions

We meet in Costa Coffee, Foyleside Shopping Centre, Derry (Opposite the Tourist Information Centre) for Guided Tour of Derry Walls and explore other City Attractions. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. The Walls’ tour costs £4.00 per person and provides insight to the history of the City including entrance to St Columb’s Cathedral. Derry is the only remaining completely walled city in Ireland and one of the finest examples of walled cities in Europe.

Family and friends are welcome at all events including children as long as you are able to supervise them and feel that activity is age appropriate. All those who participate in events are responsible for their own safety and join entirely at their own risk.

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. Down, BT19 6NW	028 91 468294 (after 6.00 pm)
Dublin	Sean O’Broin	22 The Drive, Newtown Hall, Castledown Estate, Maynooth, Co. Kildare	Ssob3012@gmail.com
North-West	Vicky Gilfillan	2 Ferney View, Ballinamallard, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh.	Vicky.gilfillan@gmail.com

AOUG Nation 12 - Survey to assist with forward planning

Please complete and return to Executive Representative maryniblett@btinternet.com by email or by Post to Glenanore, Ballymacarbry, via Clonmel, Co Waterford E91 YR60.

As AOUG is committed to offering academic and social events to Members including meetings and trips, it would be useful to know what would be of interest to you so please indicate as many as apply. The list is not exhaustive so please add any items which would appeal to you:

- Art – Visits to Museums/Galleries.....
- Culture/Heritage - Talks/Visits.....
- Concerts - (Preferences).....
- Places of Interest - Castles/Country Houses.....
- Areas of scientific interest.....
- Gardens/Woodlands.....
- Historical areas of interest.....
- Military/National Monuments.....
- Opportunities to Network (state area of interest).....
- Social Gatherings (state preference).....
- Any other area of interest.....

Travel - As Nation 12 covers a large area and has Members from across the four provinces, it would be advantageous to have some indication of density and how far people would be willing to travel. So please complete the following:

I live in: Munster..... Leinster.....Connaught.....Ulster.....

I would prefer events in the following areas.....

If an event appealed to me I would travel to.....

To facilitate different gender and age diversity please complete the following:

Male.....Female.....Rather not say.....

Age Range: Under 30..... 31 – 50.....51 – 65.....66 - 70.....70+.....

Use of electronic social media:

I would be interested in getting involved in the following areas:

Website Forum.....Facebook.....Twitter.....

(All information will be used for statistical purposes only. Any questions which may arise can be clarified with your Executive Representative or AOUG Office).