



## Association of Open University Graduates Nation 12 - Ireland

**Edition 12**

**June 2017**

### **What has been happening since the last Newsletter?**

In March we met at Drumcliffe Tea House to explore the life and times of W. B. Yeats and his choice of burial in the local churchyard under the shadow of Ben Bulbin. The Tea House is a stone building which was once the stable for St Columba's Church. We visited the local Art Gallery where Tom O'Rourke talked us through his work and the different approaches to art. Members were able to purchase work on display. During the Summer period the Gallery is mainly let to other artists to exhibit their work. We explored the Church Grounds and had an impromptu recital of our favourite Yeats poems by his graveside; *Under Ben Bulbin*, *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* and *In Memory of Major Robert Gregory*. We had photographs taken by Yeats's grave with the memory of his epitaph remaining with us: '*Cast a Cold Eye On Life, On Death, Horseman, pass by*'. As one moves around the area one is constantly aware of Ben Bulbin and the trees which frame the burial place of Yeats. In the afternoon we had a guided tour and a talk on the church of St Columba. The church was built in 1809 and substantially renovated in 1999. A monastery was established on the site in 574 from where Columba set out to spread the Gospel. He landed in Iona and spread the Word from there throughout Scotland. Other items of interest explored were The High Cross, The Round Tower and sculptures inspired by the poems of W. B. Yeats.

Our visit to Galway in April is covered by Sean O Broin in a separate article.

In May we met in the Charlemont Hotel, Armagh to plan our day on the Hill. Our first stop was the Church of Ireland Cathedral which is said to have had its beginnings in 445 when St Patrick built a church there. Its built on a hill from where the city derives its name; '*Ard Mhaca – The Height of Mhaca*'. The church as it now stands was built in 1268 and was last restored in 1834. It contains an 11<sup>th</sup> century Celtic Cross and a number of sculptures from the Iron Age. The High King of Ireland, Brian Boru, was buried in the Cathedral grounds in 1014. From there we visited No. 5 Vicars Hill which was built in 1772 to hold records for the Cathedral and the Armagh Diocese. We had a guided tour which explained the history of the building and its artefacts. Generally only examples of records are available. Many of the originals are available in Armagh Public Library which was our next stop. By this time the afternoon was drawing to a close so we only got a perfunctory overview of the Library. This is the oldest in Northern Ireland having been founded in 1771. A further visit is needed to explore the collection held which also includes 1835 Ordnance Survey Maps showing how areas looked all those years ago.

### **Future plans:**

As already advertised our next event is a visit to Newgrange on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> July. We plan to meet at the Brun na Boinne Visitors Centre at 11.45 to visit the Newgrange Heritage Site. Access to the monument is by guided tour only. So it's essential that either Sean or myself are notified of your intention to visit. Tickets can only be booked on the morning of the visit unless booking for a group of fifteen plus is made in advance. I am happy to cover morning booking, the cost is 6 euros for seniors. If travelling by car, space is available. If using public transport the 100X can be taken to Drogheda and the 163 from there to the site. It leaves Drogheda at 11.15am arriving at the Centre at 11.40am. Alternatively when numbers are known a taxi/people carrier can be booked. I look forward to seeing you there.

A Summer Lunchtime Concert at the National Concert Hall is being organised for Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August by Sean O Broin, Local Contact for Dublin. See Diary Dates for details. Sean is also proposing a visit to No. 1 Beresford Place during July or August. As this is by appointment only you will need to contact Sean direct to agree arrangements, again see Diary details.

To cover the North West Area, a meeting in Enniskillen is being covered by our new Local Contact, Vicky Gilfillan. We meet in The Castle Café, 11.00 am, Saturday September 16<sup>th</sup>. The event will take in Enniskillen Castle Museum including Inniskillings Museum which has recently been refurbished. The experience brings to life the Castle's six hundred year history, the rule of the Maguire Family over three hundred years, the Plantation Years under King James, the Flight of the Earls, and Fermanagh's important role in World War 2. It is also planned to take in Castle Coole which is 1 ½ miles from Enniskillen town centre. This is an 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion and landscaped park built for the first Earl of Belmore. Booking for this part is essential so that a guided tour and transport can be agreed. Please notify Vicky or myself of your choice.

On October 28<sup>th</sup> we pay a return visit to Waterford, meeting in Dooley's Hotel Restaurant, at 11.30 am. We can follow the Viking Trail which takes us through 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.

For Christmas we are back in Belfast for a festive lunch at the Hilton Hotel organised by John Ringland, Local Contact for Belfast area. This will be on Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> December, 12 noon. There will be time in the afternoon to visit the Continental Market in the City Square which has gone from strength to strength in recent years.

Please note that for all events those who participate 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:**

### **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 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 for 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).

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

At 2 pm 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 full support and for those who have not been in the campus in recent years it gives an 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.

## Members' News

### Members' Event – Lunchtime Recital: Music for Galway

**Meyrick Hotel, Galway on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2017.** (see next OMEGA for full report)

The Meyrick Hotel was originally an old railway terminus built by the Great Southern and Western Railway Company in Eyre Square, Galway in 1845, although not completed and opened to travellers until 1854. Despite the ravages of the Great Famine (1845), Ireland was perceived as an exotic tourist destination because of proximity to their landed estates and mansions in both Ireland and London by the Victorian gentry, so hotels of the highest standards were built to satisfy their needs.

We thoroughly enjoyed the recital by the highly talented Dublin born musician Neasa Ni Bhriain on viola, currently pursuing further studies in Weimar, and Kaart Reubel from Estonia on piano, held in the Meyrick Hotel under the lunchtime series by *Music for Galway*. This was attended by members of AOUG and friends who travelled from all over Ireland for the occasion. **Sean O Broin – Local Contact Dublin area.**

### Communication from a Member:

Back in January 2017 I had the following email from a Member under the heading *'Introduction to Ray Heath who nobody knows, because he has never attended any gathering of graduates or former students'* Ray wrote: " My name is Ray Heath, I am also Samuel after my Father. I studied for a BA Degree until 1987 and then studied for a BSc until 1992. I lived in Reading then and worked ashore as a systems engineer with the National Air Traffic Service until 1986. I had been in the Merchant Navy as a chief engineer. I sailed all over the world on all types of ships. I retired in 2003 at the age of 60 and returned to Ireland. I sailed my small boat from Plymouth to Whiterock where I live for six months of the year and spend the rest of the year i e the winter months in Spain. Sometimes I travel across Europe in my Camper Van. I still have the travelling bug and will continue to do so until no longer able. I have got a small dog called Molly who has got a passport to travel with me. I am not usually available to go to Graduate events, too busy wandering to foreign parts. I like opera, theatre and reading. I write short stories and poetry and belong to a writers' group. Although not expert on the computer I am getting better."

Next time that I heard from Ray was April 2017:

"As usual I have not been reading emails so missed deadlines.....There might be a few ex-students who remember me from past courses or Summer Schools. I enjoyed Summer Schools as all my studying was done on board ship. One TMA that I posted from Libya during Gaddafi's regime never got to my Tutor, it's probably still on the camel. I am off to Spain but might be back for May event....."

We now know Ray as he attended our Armagh event along with his dog Molly.

Included with kind permission from Ray. **Mary Niblett, Executive Representative**

### Diary Dates:

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July. 11.45am**

#### **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.

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August. 12.50am**

#### **National Concert Hall (NCH), Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2**

Meet in the Foyer for 1.05 lunchtime concert by RTE Concert Orchestra with Gavin Maloney, Conductor, Christopher Moriarty-Pearson, clarinet. Tickets 12 euros available on-line at [www.nch.ie/Online/RTECO-Summer-Lunchtime](http://www.nch.ie/Online/RTECO-Summer-Lunchtime) . Afterwards we will adjourn for lunch to The Barge, overlooking Charlemont Bridge,

accessible by the LUAS rapid transit system from the Harcourt Street stop, which is situated within the vicinity of the NCH.

**Visit to No. 1 Beresford Place July/August – date to be agreed**

The residence is a terraced five-bay, four-storey house over a basement, built c 1793 to the design of James Gandon. Tour of the residence is by appointment only so please let the Dublin Local Contact know if you are interested, preferably by email.

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September. 11am  
Enniskillen Castle Museum**

Meeting in the Castle Café, Wellington Road, Enniskillen. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. There are two museums to explore as Inniskilling Museum is based within the Castle. The experience brings to life six hundred years of history, firstly as the Maguire family stronghold, then the Plantation years and on through Fermanagh’s role in World War 2. Admission for Seniors is £3.50 which covers both Museums. There is a free car park and the bus centre is only a few minutes’ walk to the Castle. It is also planned to take in Castle Coole which is 1½ miles from Enniskillen Town Centre. This is an 18<sup>th</sup> century country mansion with a landscaped Park built for the first Earl of Bedmore. Booking is essential so that a guided tour and transport can be agreed. So please notify Vicky or the Executive Representative.

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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. Family and friends welcome.

**Nation 12 Directory**

AOUG Office		AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA	01908 653316 <a href="mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk">aoug@open.ac.uk</a>
Executive Representative	Mary Niblett	Glenanore, Ballymacarbry, Via Clonmel, Co. Waterford	00353 (0)5261 85480 <a href="mailto:maryniblett@btinternet.com">maryniblett@btinternet.com</a>

**Events Contacts**

Belfast	John Ringland	16 Marlo Drive, Bangor, Co. 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	<a href="mailto:Ssob3012@gmail.com">Ssob3012@gmail.com</a>
North-West	Vicky Gilfillan	2 Ferney View, Ballinamallard, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh.	<a href="mailto:Vicky.gilfillan@gmail.com">Vicky.gilfillan@gmail.com</a>

**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 1<sup>st</sup> July                      Newgrange Heritage Centre.....

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August                      Lunchtime Concert Dublin.....

I am interested in visit to Beresford Place        .....

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September                      Enniskillen Castle Museum.....

Coole Castle Visit        .....

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October                      Waterford Viking Trail.....

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December                      Belfast Christmas Lunch.....