



ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES THE REST OF THE WORLD

EDITION 8

OCTOBER 2016

AGM and Social Weekend in Buxton

Who would have thought that this quiet little Derbyshire Village held such a sad, yet significant, part in the history of the British Isles. The photograph below shows a row of stone cottages in Eyam, the venue for the start of the population devastation that befell the inhabitants. It was here in Eyam that the villagers sacrificed themselves when the plague was discovered. By restricting all passage in or out of the village they prevented the infection spreading with a ring of boundary stones established where the folk from surrounding villages left food and the good people of Eyam deposited money in holes in the rocks, filled with vinegar to disinfect the coins.



The attendees at the Buxton AGM Weekend took a coach out to Eyam and enjoyed an optional guided walk around the various sites in the village and beyond. Some visited the Museum, which explained various aspects of the history, others ventured across the fields to a boundary stone, whilst most restricted themselves to the central part of the village and the church. Although some graves in the churchyard bore victims of the plague, there were also grave stones all over the village adjacent to the houses, as the people were restricted from carrying bodies through the streets. One woman, in a nearby farm, had to single-handedly bury her husband and all of her children, one by one, in a neighbouring field. This may seem like a grim subject for an outing but the weather was kind to us and

surrounded by the beautiful Derbyshire countryside, all seemed to really enjoy their visit which was of course rounded off with a visit to the local café for refreshments of various styles.



Many, reflecting on their visit, declared that they wished to return to this sleepy little village to explore further and to visit Eyam Hall and the surrounding craft village.

The other excursions over the weekend were to Poole's Cavern and Chatsworth House and Gardens, both well worth you considering if you venture over to the UK for a holiday in the near future. Members attending this year came from the UK, Ireland, France and Malta so maybe you might consider coming over to join us at the next AGM from 19th -21st May 2017. It is already booked with the Blackwell Grange Hotel in Darlington and more information and a booking form will be available in your Winter OMEGA. This venue is in Region 09, in the North East of England and promises to be just as fascinating an area.

Executive Committee Meetings

Following the AGM Weekend in Buxton, Derbyshire, Mary Niblett and Mervyn Ward were welcomed as new Executive Representatives for Ireland and the North West respectively. Rosemary Hammick was co-opted for the newly amalgamated London and the South East. Philip Evans was welcomed as the new Development Officer and Derrick Franks was co-opted as Vice-Chairman, whilst Jayne Littlejohn was appointed as Company Secretary, in addition to her continuing role as Executive Representative for Region 02.

AOUG Website updated

As those of you who visit our website regularly will have seen, it has recently undergone some subtle changes. The navigation has been redesigned and the Home Page has seen some updates to layout, including a new dynamic upcoming Events section. The News and OMEGA pages have also been redesigned and we have a new Google Custom Search. However, the most significant changes have occurred behind the scenes with the whole site being re-coded to behave responsively, making it more user-friendly for visitors on mobile devices of all shapes and sizes. At the same time, we've also done a lot of housekeeping, removing out-dated material and tidying up links. If you have not visited the site for a while, now is the time to take a look at www.aoug.org.uk –The Officers would really appreciate your feedback, so please let the AOUG Office know what you think.

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. All Award amounts are agreed by the Trustees annually.

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, 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 also receive a cheque, 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 have seen in the Spring OMEGA that we are offering an AOUG 2016 Ted Castle Bursary this year. Ted was an amazing long standing member who remained happy despite extremely adversity and his name has been chosen as symbolic of all the other amazing members who have died over the last twelve months. We invite you to make a special donation of as much as you like, or as little as one pound, in memory of Ted or alternatively, any other sadly missed AOUG member that was dear to your heart. If you wish to assist our work further, you might consider making an annual covenant to help ensure that this good work is able to continue for many more years. Covenant and Gift Aid forms are available from the AOUG Office.

Your ideas wanted!

The annual commitment for these Awards is several thousand pounds and so we are constantly looking for new ways to maintain funds.

Following the Executive Committee meeting in February, the Committee had a workshop to discuss ideas for other ways to raise funds for the AOUG Foundation for Education and we are busy researching all possibilities.

Do you have any ideas?

If so please let us know so we can research your suggestion too.

Diary Dates

Members living in the 'Rest of the World' are invited to attend any of the events advertised in OMEGA when they are over in the United Kingdom and we encourage as many as possible to join us at the AGM. aoug@open.ac.uk

Friday 7th October 2016. 12noon

Meet in Michael Young Building, Room 1 ready for the Research Awards Presentations, followed by a buffet lunch and then at 2pm the Annual Foundation Lecture. There are four Research Awards to be presented this year, plus the special AOUG 2016 Ted Castle Bursary. The event offers a really interesting insight into the diverse research work being undertaken by the OU and also an opportunity to explore 'your' campus.

Please note that this is a ticket only event and so all tickets need to be purchased in advance from the AOUG

Office and any special dietary needs to be advised to ensure suitable food is available. All members, family and friends are welcome and those who are coming over for this event are also welcome to join the Executive Committee at their Friday evening meal at 7.30pm at Willen Lake, Milton Keynes and meet with your Chairman and the other Executive Committee members.

Friday 19th – Sunday 21st May 2017

AGM/Social Weekend is to be held at the Blackwell Grange Hotel, Darlington. Pre-booking is essential via the AOUG Office. All information re accommodation and excursions will be included in the Winter OMEGA.

Contact Details

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Friday 7th October 2016
OU Campus, Michael Young Building, Room 1

**AOUG Foundation for
Education Research Awards**
at 12noon

Followed at 2pm by

AOUG Foundation Lecture
"An Astronomer's view of the Birth, the
Life and the Death of the Stars"
to be given by Glenn White,
Professor of Astronomy

**£10 for full or part day including a
buffet lunch - Admission by ticket or
invite only.**

Tickets available from AOUG Office
aoug@open.ac.uk or **01908 653316**

*"If you have never been to the OU campus
before, then this is your perfect opportunity
to explore the beautiful grounds."*