



**Association of Open University Graduates      Region 02 – The South**  
**Newsletter 9 – Winter 2013/14**

I'll start this Newsletter with some items to illustrate just what the Officers of AOUG have been doing in the recent past.

**Firstly, the AOUG Website, [www.aoug.org.uk](http://www.aoug.org.uk) :**

The AOUG Officers have started work on a mammoth task of both updating and of modernising the AOUG Website. In the first phase of this work they have introduced On-line Trading for AOUG products which now operate under Nochex, the same secure payment system as used for the On-line membership renewals, and so you no longer need to wait until you receive OMEGA to order your gifts.

However the AOUG Home Page is the one we are most proud of as thanks to all the creative work of Adam Jefferson, our Web Designer, we now have moving images that can be clicked on to take you straight through to the related item. This will need to be updated regularly so if you have any high quality photos that we might use please let the AOUG Office know.

Although monitoring issues make it impossible for AOUG to offer social media-like interaction, we can offer you many more opportunities to get personally involved with your site. We are asking members to send in their write-up or reviews on lectures, films, plays, visits etc or to contribute items on specialist interest subjects. Do you want to get involved in a science group to debate various theories, an arts group to discuss techniques used in sculpture or maybe the symbolism in paintings? Do you write poetry or short stories you want to share? Or maybe mathematical questions or puzzles inspire your thoughts... All of these opportunities are now available for you to submit your items for uploading.

If academic ideals do not currently inspire you, how about more down to earth aspects? If you go to the Memory Lane pages of the Regions and Nations you will find a selection of photos just waiting for you to contribute captions – something funny about the event maybe or a particular memory it provokes. Maybe you have some other suitable photos about people or places in our area to contribute. Please send your website contributions to the AOUG Office at [aoug-website@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug-website@open.ac.uk) .

**OU Degree Ceremonies in the South (Region 02) in 2014**

Every year The Open University holds Degree Ceremonies for new graduates and their families and friends to share and celebrate their success. I'm sure you will remember how special your Degree Ceremony was for you and how important some of those people looked sitting up there on the platform as you prepared to walk across the stage.

Everyone who is a member of AOUG has a chance to don an OU gown again and re-live all those very special feelings but as one of those very special people sitting up on the platform. AOUG are invited to send two AOUG members to represent our Association at every one of the Degree Ceremonies throughout the season and so we are inviting you to volunteer to undertake this honour. Names need to be submitted very early and so if you are interested please contact either the AOUG

Office or your Executive Representative before 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013 stating your name, your PI number, your height and your OU degree level and your address, telephone number and e-mail address, plus of course the ceremony that you would like to be considered for.

Our Regional ceremonies are listed below but if you prefer to volunteer for another area then please consult the full list in your Winter OMEGA. I have included those on the periphery of the Region should you wish to go outside of the Region itself. Members will be advised in February 2014 if their name has been chosen and then the relevant gown will be ordered for you and details of your ceremony will be sent out to you shortly before the event.

**In the South there are two ceremonies,**

Wed. 10 <sup>th</sup> September	2.00pm	Milton Keynes Theatre	02
Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> September	2.30pm	The Guildhall, Portsmouth	02

**There are eight ceremonies in London, (Region 01), at The Barbican**

Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> March	10.45am	Barbican Centre, London	01
	3.00pm	Barbican Centre, London	01
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> March	10.45am	Barbican Centre, London	01
	3.00pm	Barbican Centre, London	01
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> September	10.45am	Barbican Centre, London	01
	3.00pm	Barbican Centre, London	01
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> September	10.45am	Barbican Centre, London	01
	3.00pm	Barbican Centre, London	01

**In Region 04 there are two ceremonies at The Symphony Hall in Birmingham**

Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> June	11.00am	Symphony Hall, Birmingham	04
	3.00pm	Symphony Hall, Birmingham	04

**In Region 03 there is one ceremony at The Riviera Centre, Torquay,.**

Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> May	2.30pm	The Riviera Centre, Torquay	03
-------------------------------	--------	-----------------------------	----

**Being a Local Contact**

Often members ask what being a Local Contact for a small area within a Region or Nation involves and so we have decided to give you an idea of the role. A Local Contact is an AOUG member who volunteers to be a link between other local members within a small area of any Region or Nation. They need to sign a Data Protection form to give them permission to receive contact details of other local members and then agree to have their own contact details printed in OMEGA and on the AOUG website. Their one responsibility is to arrange at least one event within their small area, three times a year and to pass all the details to their Executive Representative (or the Development Officer) before the OMEGA submission date so that it can be advertised in OMEGA and on the website. They then need to ensure that they attend their event in time to welcome other members. During the event it would be helpful to take some photos and then after the event to send brief feedback and photo to the Executive Representative. Local Contacts do not have to stand for election or attend any formal meetings, nor do they need to write any formal reports or take on any additional responsibilities unless they wish to do so. The role of a Local Contact is simply to try to maintain links between other members who live close to them.

**AOUG 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations**

To round off the year of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of AOUG, a splendid exhibition was set up in the Michael Young Building (on the OU campus at Milton Keynes). Inter alia, there were a vast number of ephemeral items showing many of the Officers and Executive Committee Members of the Association, OMEGA magazines and events and Degree Ceremonies from 1988. This formed part of the annual Award Ceremony.

As another part of the nationwide Celebrations, on 4<sup>th</sup> October, an informal dinner was held at the Days Inn, Newport Pagnell and on 5<sup>th</sup> October, Ramsey Hertzog – past Chairman – led a walking tour around the whole of the campus site. In the afternoon, a visit was made to Bletchley Park, the home of the code-breakers in World War II. The site has a collection of Enigma machines and brilliantly displays the enormous amount of work that went into breaking Nazi codes. Later on Saturday evening, to conclude the Anniversary year, a celebratory dinner was held in the VIP Mulberry suite on the OU Milton Keynes campus.

### **Regional News**

For more specific regional items, this Autumn members have enjoyed a walk themed around the life and works of JRR Tolkien in Oxford, and a visit to the Royal Armouries Museum at Fort Nelson, overlooking Portsmouth. Tolkien was a student at Exeter College, and he and his group (known as The Inklings) used to frequent The Eagle and Child pub. In 1925 he was elected a fellow of Anglo-Saxon at Pembroke College and in the post-war years was Professor of English Language and Literature at Merton College (shown below).



The Museum, at Fort Nelson overlooking Portsmouth is one of three Royal Armouries collections. The Portsmouth site is situated in one of Palmerston's Follies (forts designed to keep out the French in the 1800, but were never used for that purpose) and shows the development of guns and artillery from pre-gunpowder siege machines to the largest of modern guns. There are cannons from 12<sup>th</sup> Century China (beautifully decorated but still lethal) and mortars from the 1800s, the largest calibre gun ever built – the infamous Gerald Bull Supergun (shown below) designed for Iraq in 1988, with a bore of 1 metre (3ft 3ins) – but never fired.



Our visit programme tends to be confined to more indoors events in the Winter months, with coffee meetings in Oxford in November and December, and in Portsmouth in November and January 2014. Full details can be found on the website and in OMEGA. On April 10<sup>th</sup> we will be visiting the Sea City Museum in Southampton – this tells the story of the city and its relationship with the sea

going back several centuries, and more particularly with SS Titanic. Please come and join us at any of the events that are listed – Colin Reed or I will be carrying a large AOUG logo, or the latest copy of OMEGA to help in identification! If you have other preferences for visits, please let me know as I may be able to arrange for group discounts for admission, if numbers are sufficient. In the southern part of the Region, in late Spring, Exbury Gardens (near Southampton) should be in full bloom. Another alternative may be Windsor Castle, albeit that entry fees are between £10 and £18!

### **OU Study:**

I don't know if any of you have tried a Mooc (Massive On-line Open Course) but I am just about to start one on ecosystems; allegedly the study is for three hours or so a week, for six weeks, but – probably because I've been away from all forms of study for three years – I'm expecting it to be nearer five hours. Nonetheless, an excellent idea, and it is free! Take a look at the huge range of courses available, at <http://www.futurelearn.com> – as further examples there are short courses on Hamlet, Inside Cancer, Causes of War, Innovation and Enterprise, to name a few.

### **Keeping up to date:**

Finally, on behalf of the Treasurer and Committee, I'd ask that if you are not already doing so, that you consider paying your subscriptions by Direct Debit – it ensures that you keep in date and will receive your OMEGAs and Newsletters promptly as well as making sure that you do not get reminder letters! This can be arranged through the Milton Keynes Office, or the website. Naturally, if you change your postal or e-mail addresses, please inform me and/or the AOUG Office in due course. If you have not advised me (and the AOUG Office) of your latest e-mail address, please would you do so, as this will help considerably in reducing our postal costs.

With all good wishes for 2014.

**Mike Bechley - Executive Representative**

### **Diary Dates**

**Oxford and area:** Colin Reed 01235 815548 Mob: 0775 2932 182 (Event days only) [colin@crv-reed.demon.co.uk](mailto:colin@crv-reed.demon.co.uk)

#### **Thursday 21st November 11.00 am**

Meet for coffee in the Gallery Café in Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates. Afterwards, stroll round the newly refurbished Museum of Oxford, also in the Town Hall, entry to which is free.

#### **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December. 11.00am**

Coffee morning in the Ashmolean Museum's rooftop café. It is anticipated that the annual Oxford Christmas Market will be taking place on the nearby redeveloped site of the Castle.

#### **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2014. 11.00am**

Coffee morning in the Ashmolean Museum's rooftop café. Afterwards, stroll round the Museum or, perhaps, attend one of the free lunchtime lectures (1.15pm - 2.00pm).

**Portsmouth and South Downs:** Mike Bechley 02392552087/ 07812915458  
[m.bechley@ntlworld.com](mailto:m.bechley@ntlworld.com)

#### **Thursday 14th November 11.15am**

Meet for coffee at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road, Portsmouth, PO3 5HS. Ample free parking. We'll also be discussing events for 2014.

#### **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2014. 11.45am**

Local AGM and New Year lunch at 12.15pm at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road, Portsmouth, PO3 5HS. There is no need to make bookings.