



**ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES
IN THE NORTH-WEST**

Edition 4

Spring 2014

Local News:

Dear colleagues, I wish to bring to your attention, the fact that my Term of Office terminates next May, at the AGM. As such, we now are required to find a suitable replacement for me, as I am not able to take on a second term. Therefore please examine your own situation, concerning the possibility of you undertaking the position of Executive Representative for Region 08. Support is provided by the Officers and assistance can be provided within the Region. I think that, if a member could work as one of our Local Contacts for a small area, feeding the Executive Representative, with what you are doing and organising, this would be a great help. The Regions are large and an Executive Representative cannot be expected to travel from one end to the other on a regular basis. One must consider both family and work.

Please note that anyone who sees an item of interest to them in another Region or Nation should just contact the Executive Representative; more out of courtesy, but also so that they can be ready to welcome you. Please note that some visits do incur a charge. This could be an entrance fee, or some other type of charge, which cannot be avoided.

Our Region has had several visits organised. There have been two meals as well as a visit to the U-Boat experience at Birkenhead. That, on the 31st May, a group of us visited Liverpool Anglican Cathedral and, following this, some went on to the Walker Art Gallery. During discussions over a drink in the Cathedral ground floor refectory, the following suggestions were made, which I am looking into. Already arranged is a visit to the Liverpool Catholic Cathedral combined with the Williamson Tunnels at Edge Hill as a single event. Then another two organised are Manchester Cathedral and Chester Cathedral with a visit to the East Lancashire Railway in the New Year.

Association News:

AGM 2014 in St Albans –

Members gathered once again to discuss Association business and to re-new friendships and create new ones at the annual AGM and Social weekend which this year was in historical Roman St Albans. The hotel was beautiful with grand wooden staircases and excellent catering. This year's Gala Dinner was held for the first time ever in a marquee with elegant twinkling lights in the ceiling creating a magical atmosphere. Excursions were arranged to various Roman sites around the town and non-Executive Committee also had the opportunity to explore Butterfly World on the Saturday afternoon whilst we were hard at work. During the weekend we welcome three new Executive Representatives to the Executive Committee, Jayne Littlejohn for the South West, Janet Savin for the South and Philip Evans for the West Midlands. Pam Pearce, previously the Executive Representative for the South West also took up her new role as Publicity Officer. Margaret Stobirski, Lesley Sleight, Jean Hertzog and Violet Rook all continue in the other Officer positions. Thanks were given to those retiring from the Executive Committee, Mike Bechley, Mohammad Motawalla and Nigel Orr.

Looking ahead to AGM 2015 in Caernarfon -

The AGM and Social Weekend, to be held in May 2015, will be at Caernarfon in North-Wales. The Hotel is The Celtic Royal in the middle of Caernarfon, within easy reach of the Castle, built by King Edward 1st in 1283. Note that the Castle is not a ruin and is in a very reasonable condition. The Hotel has a fully equipped gym and a pool, as well as the usual facilities of a bar, lounge and restaurant. The website is: www.celtic-royal.co.uk

The full details and booking form will be available on the AOUG website over the Summer and then a paper copy will be available as an insert in your Winter edition of OMEGA.

On the Friday there is to be an optional trip to the top of Snowdon by train which should be a very interesting one for anyone who likes looking at scenery or taking photographs of views. In effect, it is a photographers' paradise. The scenery is magnificent, when viewed from the peak on a clear day. You can see right over Ynys Mom and along both the North and West Wales coasts, right out beyond Penrhyn Llyn. There is a modern viewing area and café right at the peak where the train pulls in and this building has all the modern facilities. This gives the impression that the building is connected with the public utilities but this is not the case, as both water for drinking and other uses, along with oil for the generator, has to be brought up by the train daily.

Saturday offers a visit to the Llanberis Slate Mine Museum. This is in the site of the Dinorwig Quarry where slate was mined until 1069. The Victorian workshops built in the shadow of Elidir Mountain allow you an insight into the work and daily lives of the men who once worked there. The site has been designed to look as though the miners and engineers have just finished their shift, put down their tools and left for home and gives the visitor a realistic view of quarry life. The slate was dressed in the workshops, that is, to have their edges trimmed and split into the thin sheets, which we see on roofs today. The slates are split by a worker knocking a chisel into it, between the layers with an hammer. This is a skilled function requiring a good eye and a steady hand. The trimming is undertaken by the use of a guillotine to produce the different sizes of slate required. Depending upon the time one makes the visit, one may see many aspects of the work being undertaken, in the form of talks or demonstrations. There is a café and shop on site, where one can acquire different items, made of slate.

The third optional excursion, which will be on the Sunday morning, is a trip to the Electric Mountain, which it is the Hydro Electric power station. From the centre, a First Hydro bus will transport us to the Power Station itself. Descending deep inside ancient Elidir mountain's labyrinth of dark and imposing tunnels, to experience one of man's greatest engineering achievements. From the main inlet valve gallery, you can then witness Dinorwig's massive pump/turbines in action and from the viewing gallery an underground film show explains the building and commissioning of the Power Station. There are two lakes in this Hydro system. one above the Power station and one below it. I have been told that, during the night, when the load on the power system is reduced, the surplus is used to pump water from the lower to the upper lake.

People in the North-West of England wishing to go will find it easy to get there by public transport as there is a reliable train service to Bangor Station from this Region, via Manchester Piccadilly, going via Warrington Bank Quay and Chester General. Therefore anyone living on the route, or adjacent to it; for example, living in Cheshire, requiring public transport, could join the service at either Warrington, or Chester, as well as several small stations en-route. On arrival at Bangor, there is a good bus service to Caernarfon, which passes the Hotel.

Do not forget to read your Summer OMEGA for more details of the weekend at St. Albans and other Association News

Peter B. Williams

'Members only' AOUG Forum on the AOUG Website

The AOUG website is continuing to develop and last year, we have introduced a new-style of Home Page, as well as an on-line Membership facility and an on-line Trading section. Now we have taken it one step further with a Members Only AOUG Forum. AOUG does not endorse the use of Facebook, or Twitter, or other similar social media sites, in the name of AOUG, as they are impossible for a volunteer organisation to monitor and thus too greater risk, to the reputation of AOUG. Obviously what individuals, who also are AOUG members, decide to do, is their own responsibility. However a Members Only Forum is within the Association's control and this can more easily be monitored, with improper items being removed, or prevented. Since we want all members to have the confidence to take part, we are now including a step by step guide to registering and being authorised. We apologise to all of you who are very familiar with these things already. Once authorised the site will give you guidance on using the various features and if you have any problems at all you are very welcome to ask the Officers for help.

Step one: Ensure that you have internet access on your computer, or equivalent, and log on in the usual way.

Step two: Type www.aoug.org.uk into the address line at the top of the page. The AOUG website should now appear with our logo clearly at the top left hand-side.

Step three: Click on the word Forum along the bottom of your screen. This will open a new window which you will need to enlarge to fill your screen

Step four: You will now be asked for your **Username** and a **Password**. Your user name can be your own name or a shortened version or nickname. Your password can be anything you like but we advise a mixture of numbers and letters about 12- 15 characters in length. Now click on the word **Register**

Step five: The screen will now show you the **Terms and Conditions**. Take as long as you like to read these but in order to progress you need to click on **Accept** at the bottom of the screen.

Step six: You will now be asked to complete a form with Username, e-mail address, password, (these must be the same as you used on the first page) first name and surname (These must be your names as used as a member of AOUG) PI Number (the number you used at the top of all those OU assignments!) your preferred Region or Nation, your gender and your date of birth (day and month and year). Finally click on the word **Save**

Step seven: You will need to confirm your **password** yet again and copy a **Registration code** (to prove you are human!!!)

Step eight: Then you will need to come out of the website and go to your **own e-mail account** where you will see an **e-mail acknowledging** your application for the Forum.

Step nine: Wait until you receive a **second e-mail** which will acknowledge you as authorised – (this may be within a few minutes or a few days, depending on if an Officer is currently on line to see your request) and then go back onto the **AOUG website** – click on **Forum** at the bottom of the **Home Page** and the forum will open and allow you to sign in with your **User name** and **Password** and then you can start exploring the instant communications possibilities.

Step ten: If you need more help just ask! **Have Fun !!!! Jean Hertzog – Association Treasurer**

Region 09 – The North

This Region stretches from coast to coast from Tyne and Wear to Carlisle and on the Westside, it borders onto our Region, 08 the North West. The current Executive Representative for Region 09, lives on the Eastern side and would like a Local Contact living in Cumbria whilst we need a Local Contact for North Lancashire. These two Local Contacts could easily support each other with alternating handshake excursions and in doing so assist both the Executive Representative for Region 09 and myself as your Executive Representative. Would you be interested in undertaking the role of Local Contact?

Diary Dates

Friday 29th August 2014 7:00pm for 7:30

Meet for a meal with friends and family at the Pack Horse Bury. This is a county Inn located on Elbut Lane, Birtle, Bury, BL9 7TU.

Website: www.packhosesinnbury.co.uk

Saturday 20th September 2014 11am

Meet in the Cathedral café for coffee before exploring the Liverpool Catholic Cathedral, The Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King. Mount Pleasant, Liverpool. L3 5TQ. This will be followed by a guided visit to the Williamson Tunnels. To visit the Cathedral is free, but a donation is appreciated. A charge of £3.00 is made if you want to visit the crypt.

Website: www.liverpoolmetropolitancathedral.org.uk

Congregate back in the café at 1pm to obtain some lunch and to re-assemble at the reception point by 2:30pm, at Williamson Tunnels. The Williamson Heritage Centre, The Old Stable Yard, Smithdown Lane, Liverpool, L7 3EE. To visit the tunnels is £4.50 per head.

Website: www.williamsonstunnel.co.uk

Sunday 19th October 2014 12pm for 12:30pm

Meet at Bents Garden Centre, Warrington Road, Glazebury, Cheshire, WA3 5NT. for Sunday Lunch

Website: www.bents.co.uk

Saturday 15th November 2014 11am

We meet in the Tea room at Sudley House Museum which is located at Mossley Hill Road, Liverpool, L18 8BX

Website: www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/Sudley

Contact Details

Executive Representative – Peter Williams 2, Sycamore Avenue, Newton-Le-Willows, Merseyside. WA12 8LT Tel: 01925 223200 peter@cynwyd.freeserve.co.uk

Local Contact – Rochdale – Margaret Stobirski 1, Walton heath Road, Walton, Warrington, Cheshire. WA4 6HZ Tel: 01925 263161 margaretstobirski@gmail.com

AOUG Office – Clerical Officer - Cheryl Cowley AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA Tel: 01908 653316 e-mail: aoug@open.ac.uk website: www.aoug.org.uk

Please remember to ensure the AOUG Office has your up to date e-mail address and any changes in other contact details.