



## ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN SCOTLAND

EDITION 5

WINTER 2013

Hello, hope all is well with you. The first item in the Newsletter will be of great interest to many due to all the media coverage of the types of energy we all now use. I must thank Lewis McKay for his marvellous account, which I found most informative, I hope you do too. May we wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**Violet Rook**

### **A Visit to Torness Nuclear Power Station on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

The Edinburgh group had a fascinating visit to Torness, which, along with Hunterston B in Ayrshire, is one of Scotland's two nuclear power stations. The plant, sited near Dunbar on the coast about thirty miles East of Edinburgh, is of the type known as an Advanced Gas Cooled reactor and is owned by the French company EDF. The group took advantage of EDF's policy of providing guided tours to organise an outing. Security at such a facility is understandably strict and details of group members have to be submitted in advance for pre-visit vetting. Additionally, we all had to provide photographic ID on the day and undergo airport-style searches, including a sniffer dog, before being allowed on to the facility, no cameras or bags allowed!

The site is vast covering fifty acres and the height of the main building is over ten stories. We were allowed access to the whole plant, including the reactor hall, control room and turbine hall. Uranium fuel rods are withdrawn from their graphite moderators, heat from nuclear fission is transferred to circulating carbon dioxide which in turn creates steam which drives the high-pressure turbines and thereby electricity is generated. Sea water is used to help the condensation of the fresh water within it's the self-contained system. The warmed sea water flows back out to sea, creating an ideal environment for sea bass stocks. Spent fuel rods which typically last for up to seven years are transported to Sellafield for reprocessing and approximately 96% is reused as fuel.

Each reactor has its own control station and turbine and shutdown can begin in seconds. At the time of our visit both reactors were operating providing one thousand, two hundred Megawatts of electricity – about 20% of the UK requirement. Power is fed to the national grid via underground cables – pylons only being visible two miles from the plant. The whole facility is in immaculate condition with all areas kept scrupulously clean. The geological stability of the rocky landscape makes an accident like Fukushima highly unlikely and the strict safety procedures and meticulous attention to safety make a Chernobyl style disaster hopefully well nigh impossible. The power station is scheduled to be decommissioned in 2023, but an extension of up to seven years, dependent on the state of the graphite, seems likely.

With the continuing controversy surrounding nuclear power plants and the recent complaints about price increases the company is keen to provide a positive and customer-friendly image. We were welcomed by hugely enthusiastic staff, who are evidently proud to work at the plant. Our visit was one I'd recommend to anyone.

**Lewis McKay**

## Association News

### **AOUG Website [www.aoug.org.uk](http://www.aoug.org.uk):**

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 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 lots 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. The AOUG Office is just waiting for all your contributions to [aoug-website@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug-website@open.ac.uk) So come on get involved with your AOUG website.

## Diary Dates

### **Edinburgh Group**

#### **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December. 4.00pm**

Meet for some soup and cake at Judith's at 62, Queen Street, Edinburgh before a short walk to the Assembly Rooms, George Street, Edinburgh for a concert that starts at 6.00pm when the Scottish Chamber Orchestra will perform their Christmas Concerto. The music includes two pieces from Bach and one from Handel and Corelli. Tickets £10.00 in advance from the Usher Hall Box Office 0131 228 1155 or £12.00 on the day at the door.

#### **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2014. 12.30pm**

The Annual Lunch at the Royal Overseas League, Princes Street. Edinburgh will be in the Robert Louis Stevenson room. Three courses to include coffee is £19 (drinks and tips are not included) Lunch will be served at 1.00pm.

#### **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2014. 10.30am**

Meet on the ground floor foyer, café and shop area of the National Gallery, The Mount, Prince's Street, Edinburgh to see an exhibition of JD Fergusson in the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art (MOD2/Dean Gallery) Admission £7.00, concessions £5.00. Friends of the National Gallery are free on the production of a membership card. This is the final show in the Scottish Colourist Series and is a major retrospective of the work of this artist – the most international and longest lived of the group. John Duncan Fergusson was born in

Leith and his distinguished career began at the Trustees Academy, however France became his principal inspiration and he quickly became established in Paris within its stimulating milieu of artists. In 1913 he married Margaret Morriss - his life-time partner and the inspiration for much of his work.

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2014. 11 00am.**

The format of the Edinburgh AGM will continue to be a lunchtime event at the Quaker Meeting House, Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh, with a speaker. Admission £5.00. Members can have lunch at a nearby venue after the meeting.

**THE HIGHLANDS**

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December. 2.00pm.**

Meet at the Information Centre at Braemar for a tour of the centre and then a cup of tea at one of the nearby hotels which are just two minutes walk-away. The Centre is on the main street with car parking at the front and back. The Centre, which is kept open even in poor weather conditions, is just inside the town boundary. Contact Local Contact in severe snow or frost.

**THE BORDERS**

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> December. 2pm**

Meet in the car park near the entrance of the Edinburgh Woollen Mill, situated on the A68 road on the road out of the town towards the town of St. Boswells. for a visit to the lovely town of Jedburgh with its Abbey and historic connections with Mary Queen of Scots, Sir Walter Scott and Robbie Burns and see the New Year celebrations activities. Tea and chat.

**GLASGOW**

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2014. 2.00pm**

Meet in foyer at the Millennium Hotel near the Queens Street Station, Glasgow. Visit the famous George Square and City Chambers, near new developments along the Style Mile.

**Glasgow Event**

I visited Glasgow in September and was highly impressed by its growth and development. I hope many of you who live in the city or nearby will come to the Millennium Hotel in January. We can talk and walk, have tea and cakes and celebrate what will be still the New Year. After Christmas I shall be sending invitations to the meeting by email and post. Please attend and ask questions. It would be nice if Glasgow had a Local Contact similar to Edinburgh. All members will be very welcome.

**Association Contacts**

**AOUG Development Officer**, Violet Rook, [viola.rook@btinternet.com](mailto:viola.rook@btinternet.com) 07967622091

**AOUG Office** at Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA. 01908 653316 [aoug@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk)

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**Please complete both sides of this response form and return to the AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA or by email to [aoug@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk)**

Name. .... P.I. Number.....

My email address is .....

Telephone number ..... Mobile number .....

I would be willing to write a Newsletter article about .....

## OU Degree Ceremonies in Scotland in 2014:

Every year The Open University holds Degree Ceremonies for new graduates and their family 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. Well now you have 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 ceremonies in Scotland are listed below but if you prefer to volunteer for another area then please consult the full list in your Winter OMEGA. 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.

Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> June	11.0am	The Usher Hall, Edinburgh	11
	3.30pm	The Usher Hall, Edinburgh	11

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### Local Contacts

**Edinburgh Chairman:** Tom Nisbet, 11 Jeffrey Avenue, EH4 3QY (0131 332 8313)

**Edinburgh Programme Coordinator:** Lewis McKay, 100 Oxfangs Road, EH10 7AZ  
[lewis.mckay1@btopenworld.com](mailto:lewis.mckay1@btopenworld.com)

**Edinburgh Treasurer/Events Coordinator:** Diane Day 38/8 Littlejohn Road, EH10 5GJ  
Friends and partners are welcome to all events. Cheques for Edinburgh events should be made payable to 'Edinburgh OU Graduates', please and sent to Diane Day.

#### Being a Local Contact

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. 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. 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.

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**Please complete both sides of this response form and return to the AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA or e-mail to [aoug@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk)**

I am interested in attending events in .....

I am willing to organise a single event.....

I am interested in becoming a Local Contact for.....

I am interested in learning more about the role of Executive Representative .....