



## ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES in IRELAND

**Edition 6**

**August 2014**

### **A Very Successful AGM in St Albans**

AOUG had a very successful Annual General Meeting and Social Weekend at The Noke Thistle in St Albans. The weather was very kind to us and we had a full weekend of sunshine. The trips which had been organised to the Verulamium Park, The Roman Museum, Butterfly World and a walk around St Albans, were very well attended. There is a very comprehensive write up with photos in your Summer OMEGA.

### **Looking ahead to the 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](http://www.celtic-royal.co.uk) I sincerely hope you can join us.

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 photographer's paradise. The scenery is magnificent, when viewed from the peak on a clear day. You can see right over Ynys Mon 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 on the site of the Dinorwig Quarry where slate was mined until 1969. 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 a 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. Caernarfon is an easily accessible venue from Ireland but especially those of you in the South as ferries run from Dublin to Holyhead with only a short drive across Anglesey and around the coast to Caernarfon.

## **Developing Ireland - Being a Local Contact**

Ireland is once again without an Executive Representative to co-ordinate all activities for the whole of Ireland but we are also looking for members to develop smaller parts of the Nation and to act as Local Contacts. 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 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. A Local Contact's role is simply to try to maintain links between other members who live close to them. Local Contacts are currently being sought for any of the West Coast areas in both the North and South of Ireland. Do you live on that side of Ireland? Would this be something you might be interested in? If so please fill in the response slip.

## **Provisional ideas**

### **Visit to Kilruddery House and Gardens, Bray, County Wicklow**

It might be possible to arrange a visit to Kilruddery House and Gardens, Bray, County Wicklow, the residency of the Earl of Meath (Brabazon Family), subject to sufficient interest. This would take place after Culture Night and before closure of public admission for the Winter season. If interested speak to Sean O'Broin on Culture Night or contact him by telephone or e-mail.

### **Trip to Galway (Late August / Autumn, 2014)**

Arrangements are being finalised by Matt Reville for a proposed visit to Galway City by train in late August or early Autumn. If interested, please contact Sean O'Broin, who will forward further definite information when available. Please note that if overnight accommodation is required this must be booked separately.

## **Degree Ceremonies**

On a different note have you ever considered processing at The Open University Degree Ceremonies especially in Dublin or Belfast? Local members, who processed for AOUG during 2014, all reported having really enjoyed their day and the pleasure they felt at sharing the sense of occasion with the new graduates whilst at the same time recalling memories of their own special day. AOUG were fortunate this year in also having our own stand at the Dublin Ceremony, where AOUG Officers gave out over one hundred AOUG information packs to the attending new graduates. We were not able to take a stand to the Belfast Ceremony due to the date clashing with the AOUG AGM Weekend in St Albans but AOUG have already been invited, and accepted to have stands at both venues for 2015.

Dates for 2015 are not finalised as yet but if you would like to be involved and share one of these special days in 2015, please look out for our new application/interest form for next year's Degree Ceremony events which will be part of your next Newsletter and will also be included with the Winter OMEGA.

## Members only AOUG Forum on the AOUG Website

The AOUG Website is continuing to develop and last year, we 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](http://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 **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**

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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 e-mail [aoug@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk)**

Name ..... PI Number .....

My current e-mail address is .....

My home phone number is ..... My mobile is .....

I am interested in being a Local Contact for ..... area.

I am interested in information on being an Executive Representative .....

### Contact Details

AOUG Office – [aoug@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk) 0(044) 1908 653316

#### LOCAL CONTACTS

**Executive Representative** – Vacant

**Munster area** – Mary Niblett 052 61 85480 Mobile: 0831223796 [maryniblett@btinternet.com](mailto:maryniblett@btinternet.com)

**Dublin area including Longford, Meath, West Meath and Offal** – Sean O’Broin 089 4294935  
[ssob3012@gmail.com](mailto:ssob3012@gmail.com)

**Belfast and surrounding area** – John Ringland 02891 468294

### Diary Dates

DATE	EVENT
<b>Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September</b>	Meet at 6.00 pm at Beshoffs, O’Connell Street (within vicinity of Cathedral Street) for a ‘Fish Supper’. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. For one night only, Dublin city’s museums, galleries, churches, historic houses, artists’ studios, cultural centres and more, will open their doors late for a free night of entertainment, discovery and adventure. Members can plan their favoured itinerary for the Culture Night over supper.
<b>Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October</b>	Meet at 1.30 pm at the entrance to Castletown House, Celbridge, County Kildare. Castletown is the largest and oldest Paladian residence in Ireland. It was built originally for William Connolly, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons. The Berkeley Collection of toys, costumes and dolls from the 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> Century currently on display is well worth a visit. Access to Celbridge by Number 67 bus from Dublin City Centre stopping at Westmoreland Street and Parkgate Street (within vicinity of Heuston Bridge/Railway Station) and the fare is in the region of €3. This station is also linked to Connolly (terminus for Belfast trains) by the rapid transit Luas tram system. Times of Dublin buses for Celbridge are displayed along the route on the Real Time Passenger Information (TRTPI) System throughout the city. Celbridge is well served by numerous restaurants and licensed premises.
<b>Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Meet at 12.00 noon in the Hilton Hotel, Belfast (within vicinity of Central Railway Station) for a festive lunch. A copy of OMEGA will be on the table. The lunch will provide the opportunity for members of AOUG in Ireland to celebrate the Festive Season in style as well as spending some time shopping in Belfast before returning home.
<b>Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2015</b>	Meet at 11.30am, at St John’s Castle for a visit to the cultural attractions of Limerick (City of Culture, 2014) to include St. John’s Castle, Treaty Stone, St. Mary’s Cathedral and Hunt Museum. After visiting St, John’s Castle and the Treaty Stone, lunch will be served in the Hunt Museum followed by a viewing of the artefacts on display in the museum.

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I expect to attend the following events .....

I would prefer to attend activities around .....

A suitable meeting place in my area would be .....

I would like to attend ..... type activities.

I would prefer weekends..... weekdays ..... morning .....afternoon ,,,,,,, evening .....

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