



Edition 6

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Association of Open University Graduates

Europe

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I hope that you enjoy the contents of this Newsletter which has an AOUG and Open University theme. I also apologize for the delay with this Newsletter which is a few weeks late, owing to hospitalization.

In September I attended The Open University's Europe Degree Ceremony at Versailles, France. The Vice Chancellor, Martin Bean, kindly found time to stop and say hello, which considering his busy day was very encouraging that he takes such an interest in what is happening in AOUG. You will find towards the end of this Newsletter a notice from the Officers of AOUG, inviting members to represent the Association at the 2014 degree ceremonies. I usually represent AOUG at Versailles but if there are two of our Europe members who would like to attend, it is no problem for me to stand down. I must point out that owing to economic restraints, neither AOUG nor The Open University can pay expenses so we need to fund our own travel and overnight costs.

You will read in the next edition of OMEGA all about the 2013 Awards Ceremony, Lecture and 25th Anniversary celebrations which took place in October. I was very sorry that I had to miss this event as I have attended all for about nineteen years! However I am reliably informed that the weekend was well attended and very enjoyable.

Here in Calvados, the leaves are rapidly falling and the temperature is dropping and the nights, drawing in. As we live in a variety of climates I am sure that for some of you conditions are different but I do hope that none of you are experiencing the harm that the weather can cause. I take this opportunity to wish you all a very early, Happy New Year.

Patricia Cowling

Amsterdam – Europe/Yorkshire Handshake Event

There was a hurricane ripping its way through Northern France, the English Channel and the south of England during the weekend before the Europe, Yorkshire hand shake visit to Amsterdam on Tuesday 29th October. However eight brave souls risked a very choppy sea to cross the sea from Hull to Rotterdam. They assure me that they enjoyed the food, entertainment and shops on board, and slept soundly!

I am sorry, that due to hospitalization I was unable to join them, and apologize if any of our Europe members turned up at 10.30 am at the tourist office in Amsterdam, our meet up point. Due to the bad weather, the coach bringing the Yorkshire group to Amsterdam arrived late so they were unable to do my job for me.

Jean Hertzog has kindly sent me a report about what they got up to. Considering they only had one day, arrived late, which chopped an hour off their time, they certainly made the most of it. Jean writes;

“We wandered down streets with magic mushrooms and hooker pipes in the windows and found an interesting bar/cafe where a very large ginger cat immediately adopted Carol-Ann by settling down, completely uninvited, across her lap - apparently we were in its way and stopping it getting to its favourite spot by the window!

Armed with maps and tourist information and suitably refreshed we split up to explore - Carol-Ann and Margaret hit the shops and found a large cheese shop where they consumed vast samples of cheese before actually buying some. Derrick went sightseeing on foot on his own - came back with some interesting photos from the red light district but he says he didn't get any samples and the rest of us took the Hop on Hope off Canal bus to see the sights sitting down.

We tried the `Blue route` first around the eastern side before getting off and finding a little deli for lunch, usually a take away but with a few bar stools, so we ate in - everything fresh and homemade - lovely young women who didn't speak much English and since we didn't know Dutch, we used sign language. Ramsey got a homemade waffle and Lesley managed to come away with the recipe for the courgette soup that three of us had shared. We found a street market but did not have anywhere long enough to see it all - Avril found a suitable Christmas present and then to the `Red route` canal bus through the central area of the city and past all the museums and other famous landmarks.

We intended to get off near the Amsterdam Museum and walk to the Flower Market but the storm had hit Amsterdam during the night and two uprooted trees blocked the canal so we had to take a diversion to the green route and ended up at Ann Frank's House instead. From here we walked back wandering through the streets of very fashionable clothing shops (no prices), past more uprooted trees before reaching Dam Square with all the wonderful buildings and a few street entertainers. Then back through the tourist shopping area, now armed with bags of

tulip bulbs and soft clog slippers, before we headed back to meet the coach. As soon as we reached the queue for the coach the skies opened and the rain bounced up to our knees whilst we waited for more than half an hour before getting onto a coach for the long journey back to the ship.



A hot shower, change and ready for the evening meal and another visit to the Irish Bar before bed. Breakfast on board and then disembarked in Hull - A really good break with really good company - away from the usual demands of life. We saw lots of museums from the outside but none of us managed time for real culture on this visit - maybe next time.”

Thank you for that report Jean.

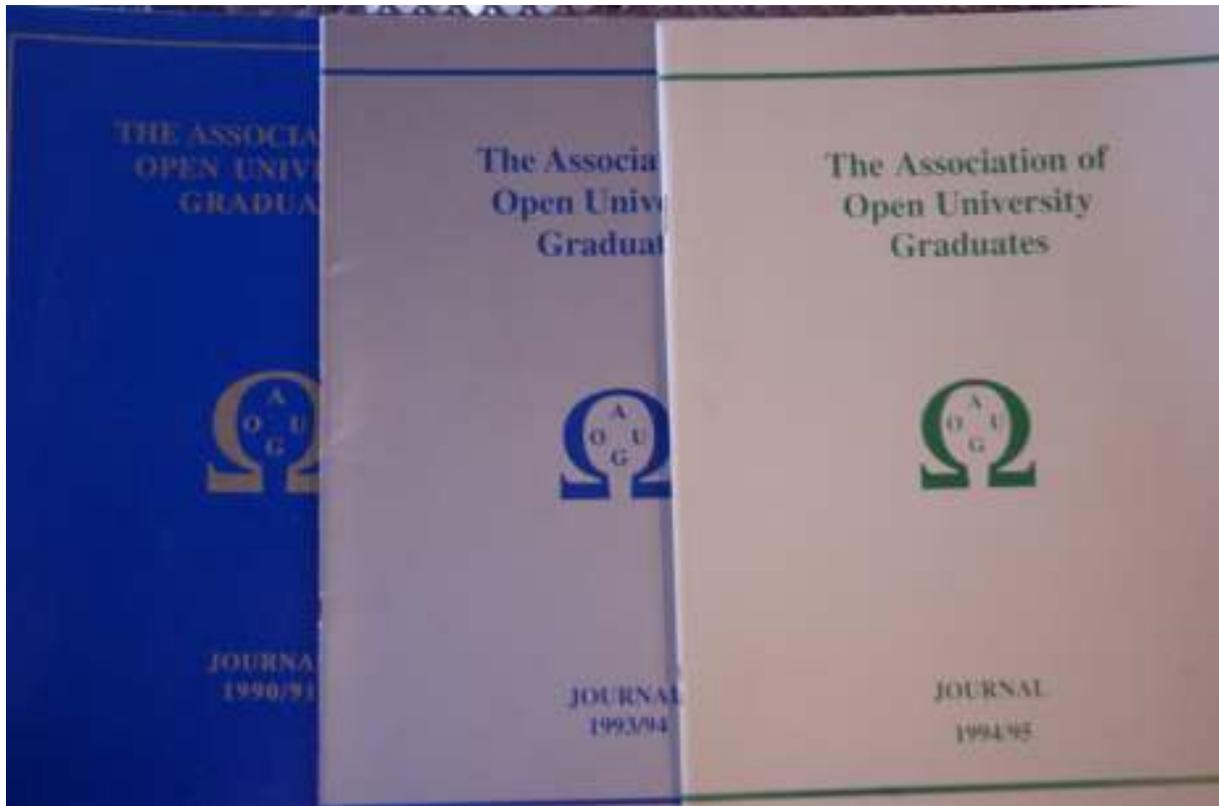


JOURNAL – An AOUG Publication

At the beginning of the Association of Open University Graduates, the membership received an extra publication, beside OMEGA, which was entitled JOURNAL. This was AOUG's early contribution towards its support of The Open University and its graduates. Within the pages of JOURNAL were selections of the results of OU research students' theses, covering a diverse range of subjects, which highlighted the range of subjects on offer from The Open University.

The first JOURNAL dated 1990/91, was edited by Jean Posthuma, the Association's Publicity Officer, with the Foreword by the Vice-Chancellor of the day, Sir John Daniel, a stalwart of the Association. Within the pages there were six Papers, covering the Arts and Social Sciences, very interesting subjects for members interested in those areas. The following three editions included the Social Sciences, the Arts and Science, which is a vast subject on its own with its various subject matters. The Forewords continued to be supplied by notaries of The Open University, which reinforced the appreciation of the University towards the work being done by the Association. Many research students do not have the opportunity to be published so consequently Journal was the only opportunity for them and for their supervisors' appreciated the publicity for the research work being carried out in their faculty.

Sadly Jean Posthuma died during the publication of her 4th JOURNAL, which was completed by her husband Larry, also an AOUG member, with the support of the Chairman of the day Brian Fox. I then had the onerous task of following in Jean's footsteps, as editor.

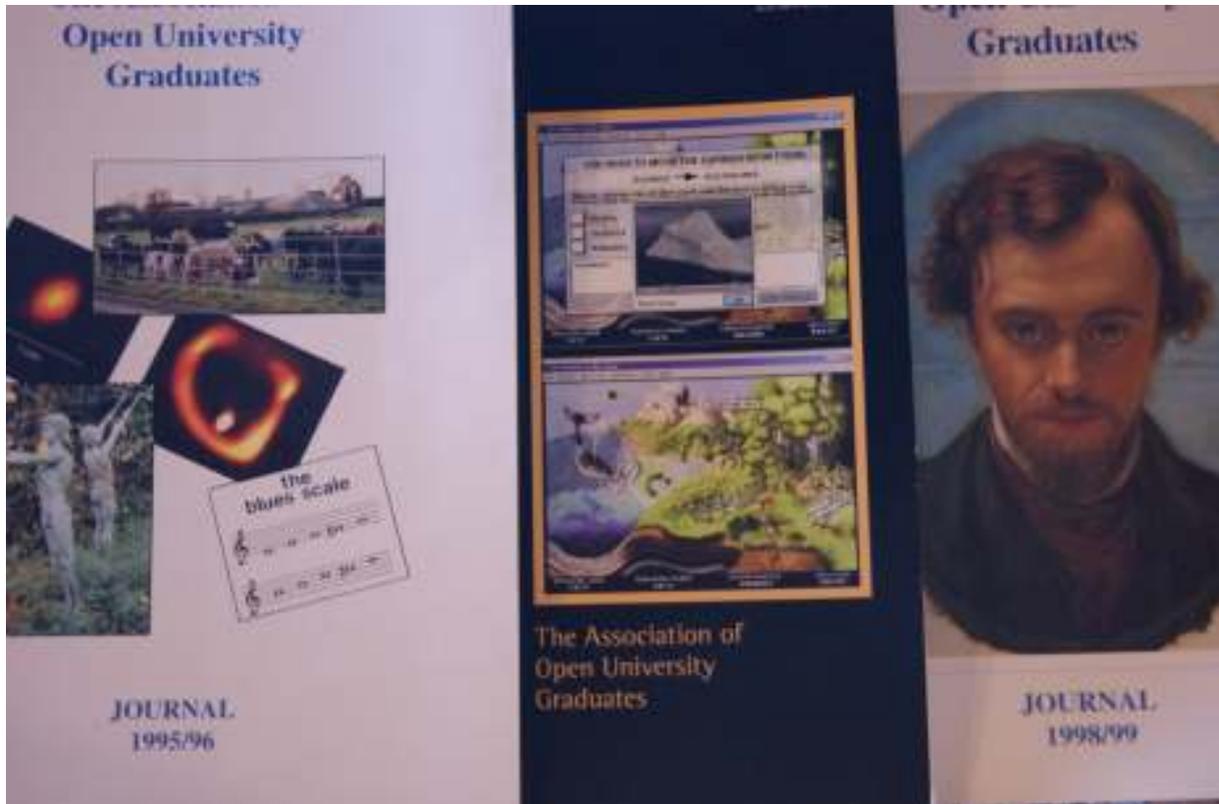


The first item I had to address was complaints about the contents of JOURNAL from members. They were not complaining at Jean's work as editor, but at the actual contents. There was nothing between the pages for them! As Open University graduates, our members, then as now, had studied right across the OU spectrum of subjects. The scientist had studied geology, chemistry, physics, et cetera., just a few of the many divisions on offer for scientific study. The same applied to the Arts, music, paintings, literature, history and so on. And then there was Mathematics, Social Sciences, Technology. Where do you begin to satisfy all are members with so many areas to be considered? The answer was very simple, you cannot all be satisfied but as it was the members' subscription that paid for JOURNAL I had to consider their comments.

I began by looking at the visual appeal and that was easy to address. More colour was needed and I also felt that there was a need to know more about the authors' of each paper with a brief biography and photograph but from there on I had my work cut out. I ended up for my first edition by inviting previous AOUG Award recipients to contribute and was able to cover science (2 papers, physics and pollution), social science (psychology) and the Arts (music). However, I was still left with the problem of not covering sufficient subjects and that problem continued for another four editions. During those editions I did manage to include technology and mathematics which at the time covered most of the faculties of The Open University.

However, sadly, the time had come for the Executive Committee of the Association to make the decision to end JOURNAL, which was not due to the lack of interest of some members, but due to the enormous costs of publication.

Patricia Cowling



AOUG Website 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

So come on get involved with your AOUG website.

OU Degree Ceremonies in Europe 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 20th 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 Europe ceremony is 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 6th September 2014 at 14h30

Palais des Congres, Versailles, France