



ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES LONDON 01 REGION

NEWSLETTER 9

SPRING 2016

Executive Representative's Report

I continue to owe a great debt of gratitude to Margaret Brett for supporting outings and for organising the popular lunches at Trattoria Verdi, which continue to attract diners not only from London Region but from other Regions reasonably accessible to London.

I must also reiterate my thanks to members who do not have email but would like to receive the Newsletter and who send stamps/stamped addressed envelopes. I see from the press that postage will rise by 1p on 29th March 2016 to 55p second-class (64p first class), increasingly forcing people to turn to electronic communications.

People and places

The lunch on **12th January** was again well attended and, unlike some January gatherings, was free from snow. The staff at Trattoria Verdi are always welcoming and friendly and help to make these happy and convivial events.

On **17th February** a group assembled at Embankment Underground Station to embark on the Thames Clipper river bus to **Greenwich** and were pleased to welcome Paul Emerson from Region 13 and Colin Reed from Region 02. Colin is a regular visitor from Oxford, where members are always welcome at their regular pub lunches, and Paul had travelled up from Hastings and hopes to join more of our events in future when he has time.

The river journey afforded excellent views of historic old buildings, at one time only accessible by water; these nestle beside imaginative new examples of modern architecture providing business premises, shops and housing. We joined Margaret and Don Brett in the café in the modern Tourist Information Centre, which was worth a visit in itself with informative displays and helpful staff, before continuing to the Maritime Museum to marvel at the exhibition *Samuel Pepys: Plague, Fire, Revolution*, which runs until 28th March. This was engrossing and made one more aware how much is owed to this master diarist, whose neat shorthand notes were also displayed. (Another biography to add to my "must read" list.) There was no time or energy to explore the rest of the Museum before returning to Greenwich Pier for the forty-five minute voyage by Clipper back to Embankment; a good bus service was available from outside the Museum for those not wishing to travel by boat.

In February I was invited to **St Albans** to join members of Region 06 for lunch at the **Peahen**, their regular watering hole. It was a pleasure to meet up with Jean Grout, until recently Executive Representative for that Region, and Eric McKinnon, my predecessor as Executive Representative of Region 01 and catch up with news of their activities. As always the Peahen offered a varied and tasty menu and it was most enjoyable to chat to the members present, many of whom I had met before and who made me very welcome. I was able to give them copies of the draft programme of events planned for the next few months for Region 01 in the hope that some of them might find time to join us.

Members who have occasion to telephone the **AOUG office at Milton Keynes** may be aware of staff changes; **Cheryl Cowley**, for many the “voice of AOUG”, has left after nearly fifteen years and has departed with grateful thanks for all her hard work and long service. The new Office Administrator is **Sandra Higgins** who has worked previously for the YMCA, and she will be ably assisted by the Clerical Assistant, **Tami Davey**, who has been working with Cheryl since April 2015. Executive Representatives had the pleasure of meeting Sandra at a recent meeting at AOUG office and it is hoped that she will soon settle in to her new position with the support of the Chairman and Treasurer as well as the other Officers. Another change on the horizon is the Book Keeper, **Danny Kelly**, who will be retiring at the end of March after ten years with AOUG. Darren Harvey will be taking over from him on a temporary basis.

Membership

This remains fairly steady at about three hundred and fifty for Region 01 but it was reported at the recent Executive Committee Meeting that overall eighty-one new members had joined in 2015. Some came through the Website and others joined at Degree ceremonies up and down the country.

Local Contact

At the present time nobody has volunteered to act as a local contact but it is hoped that someone will step up to fill this useful role; local knowledge is invaluable to plan visits to places and events of interest and Greater London is a large area, no doubt containing hidden gems at present undisclosed.

Rosemary Hammick

Association News

AOUG Trading

Members are reminded that some souvenirs advertised in OMEGA magazine can be purchased at the Annual General Meeting in May.

Fundraising for the AOUG Foundation for Education charity

Every year the Association's own charity offers nine awards to Research students, in their final year, who have been nominated by OU staff from their Faculty or Research Centre and they go forward for consideration to be selected to receive an award. The successful recipients are then presented with their awards at a prestigious ceremony on the OU campus on the first Friday in October. Each award comprises of a framed certificate and a cheque for £300. Occasionally a Bursary is also offered and although they can be nominated by their supervisors as with the awards, research students also have the option to self-nominate. These Bursaries usually offer a monetary award of £1,000 in addition to their framed certificate. This money is not to be used as a grant to complete their Research project but it can be used in any way the recipient wishes in order to develop their research further than originally planned, be it extending the area of research, attending a conference or publishing papers.

AOUG Foundation for Education also funds awards for new graduates in the Regions and Nations who have gained their first degree whilst overcoming adversity over and above that of the average student. There have been some amazing new graduates nominated for these awards and during 2015 seventeen such awards were approved. These new graduates received £100 along with their framed certificate.

However in order to continue presenting these awards each year, AOUG has to ensure that there are sufficient funds to cover them and this is where you come in as these awards rely on the generosity of you, the members, as it is mainly your donations (with a little help from bank interest) that enable us to continue with this good work. You will see in the Spring OMEGA that we are offering an AOUG 2016 Ted Castle Bursary this year and you can therefore make a special donation of as much as you like, or as little as one pound, in memory of Ted or any other deceased AOUG member who was dear to your heart; or you might consider making an annual covenant to help ensure that this good work is able to continue for many more years.

Diary Dates

I append a list of future activities to note in your diaries. Please check nearer the dates if you hope to attend in case there are any last minute changes. Further ideas and suggestions will be most welcome for future programmes.

Friday, 1st April 2016 – 11am

Meet Tate Britain, Millbank (embankment entrance) to re-view a few favourite art works before short walk over the river to **Lambeth Palace** for a rare opportunity to visit gardens not normally open to the public (open 12noon-3pm). Admission £4.00. Refreshments. Gift Shop.

Tuesday, 12th April 2016 – 12noon

Meet at the Trattoria Verdi Restaurant, 110 Southampton Row, Holborn, WC1B 4BL (020-7405 8001) for the usual excellent Italian lunch (cost for two-course meal with wine remains £13 per head). Bookings to Margaret Brett on 020-7387 4975.

****Friday-Sunday, 13th-15th May 2016****

AOUG AGM at **Buxton**

Wednesday, 15th June 2016 – 11am

Following the talk on 14th March, meet **Sloane Square U/G Station** to walk to **Chelsea Physic Garden** (66 Royal Hospital Road, London SW3 4HS). Alternative route: 170 bus from Victoria railway station. Unique collection of over 5,000 different edible, useful, medicinal and historical plants. Entrance fee £10.50. Free guided tours every day. Café. If time allows, **Carlyle's House**, 24 Cheyne Row, Chelsea is a short walk away. This was the home of the historian and philosopher Thomas Carlyle and his wife Jane Welsh Carlyle, herself a prominent woman of letters, and contains some of Carlyle's books and a collection of portraits by Whistler among others. Entrance fee. Free to NT members.

Tuesday, 12th July 2016 - 12 noon

Meet at the Trattoria Verdi Restaurant, 110 Southampton Row, Holborn, WC1B 4BL (020-7405 8001) for a great Italian lunch (cost for two-course meal with wine remains at £13 per head). Bookings to Margaret Brett on 020-7387 4975.

Tuesday, 19th July 2016 – 11am

Meet at **Royal Victoria station on Docklands Light Railway** for walk to Royal Docks to take 10 minute "flight" on London's only **Cable Car**, with stunning views across London and the Thames. Alighting at **Greenwich Peninsular** pick up '**The Line**', a dedicated modern and contemporary art walk. This follows the waterways and the line of the Meridian between Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the 02 and is marked with totem poles.

Wednesday, 10th August 2016 – 11am

Meet **Wembley Park Station** (Metropolitan/Jubilee Lines) for bus journey to the **BAPS Shri Waminarayan Mandir Hindu Temple**, 105-119 Brentfield Road, Neasden NW10 8LD, to enjoy intricate marble and wooden carving and learn about the world's oldest living faith in the 'Understanding Hinduism' exhibition. Free guided tours or Audio Guided Tour. Award-winning garden. Vegetarian restaurant. Souvenir shop.

Advance date:

Tuesday, 18th October 12 noon

Meet at the Trattoria Verdi Restaurant, 110 Southampton Row, Holborn, WC1B 4BL (020-7405 8001) for excellent lunch (cost for two-course meal with wine remains at £13 per head). Bookings to Margaret Brett on 020-7387 4975.

CONTACTS

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Lunches

Margaret Brett - 020-7387 4975

NOTE: All those who participate in events are responsible for their own safety and join entirely at their own risk.