



ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES LONDON 01 REGION

NEWSLETTER 8

WINTER 2015

EXECUTIVE REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Lunches

The lunches at Trattoria Verdi, organised by Margaret Brett, continue to be popular and well-supported and at the meeting on 3rd November Margaret was surprised to be greeted with a chorus of “happy birthday”, in anticipation of the event the following day.

We welcomed Sarah Jones, Senior Development Officer at Milton Keynes, with whom Margaret had been in touch with a view to a future visit to the OU campus to view the Legacy Garden. Sarah explained that she had only held her present position for a few months but was enjoying visiting OU centres around the country, and spoke briefly about her work and background. She was delighted to be given one of the famous AOUG pens.

It was a particular pleasure to welcome back Pat Randle after a long absence from the lunches due to ill-health.

Events

The Monument proved a convenient meeting place for the **Great River Race** in September, enabling us to enjoy a cup of coffee before joining the crowds of supporters on London Bridge (in the light rain). It is an exciting moment when the first (slowest) boats of the 300+ contestants emerge from the shadow of Tower Bridge on their marathon row from Millwall Dock Slipway en route to the finish line at Richmond Bridge. The weather soon brightened up and once the majority of boats had passed we travelled by Underground to Richmond to cheer the arrivals and spend a very pleasant afternoon by the river, the first time I had included this section of the race.

The visit to the **Museum of London Docklands** in October was enhanced by well-informed staff who guided us through the reproduction of “Sailortown”, with rousing tales (and sound effects) of life on shore for crews between voyages. Living conditions were basic (but cheap), and probably still better than those on board the ships as they traded round the world.

Also in October Margaret and I joined the **Oxford** local group for their regular lunch at the Mitre and afterwards Margaret kindly took me on a whistle-stop tour of the city as it was many years since I had spent time there.

AOUG FOUNDATION FOR EDUCATION AWARDS FOR REGIONS AND NATIONS

As you may know, AOUG sponsors a charity to give Awards to new graduates who have overcome adversity above and beyond that of most Open University students, and two candidates were selected for London 01 Region.

Dion Gibbs is disabled and experiences constant chronic pain. His Nominator writes “He has arthritis which makes sitting and standing for extended periods painful. He also had treatment for cancer in 2012/13. Despite these health setbacks he persevered with his studies and achieved a BA(Open) in 2015. He has written two books on political theory and has founded a political party, ‘Peoples’ Social Freedom Party’. He hopes to use his skills to help him understand the human situation and political realities of the day.” In view of his disabilities he was presented with his Award Certificate and cheque at his home and looked forward to displaying the Certificate alongside his other awards.

Ben Hale left school at eighteen after completion of A Levels to join the Royal Air Force. During his sixteen years in the RAF he served for three months in Kandahar, Afghanistan in 2009, and studied S104 while the airfield was attacked regularly by Taliban rockets. In 2010 he deployed to Qatar and completed S250 while working twelve hour days non-stop for four months on a busy airbase. His mother died suddenly in 2012 but overcoming this setback he completed modules S330 and SXG288 while travelling regularly overseas on duty. Despite his full-time military career and raising three young children with his wife, his passion for Geology and Environmental Science never faltered and allowed him to achieve a BSC(Hons) in Natural Sciences.

He leaves the RAF in November this year and following a two-week attachment with the Crossrail project in London has been appointed Information and Compliance Manager with that company, which will enable him to combine the technical knowledge gained from his degree with his prior management experience. Although he lives in Sussex it was convenient for him to receive his Award in London and, as on a previous occasion, Michelle Hemming, Assistant Director of Student Services at the OU Camden office, kindly made an office available at their premises for the presentation. He was particularly pleased to receive this in person as he had been too busy with his career to attend the degree ceremony in the Barbican earlier in the year.

MEMBERSHIP

I have written recently to welcome seven new members to London Region and have sent each a preview of plans for the first few months of 2016 as outlined at the end of this letter, expressing the hope that it may be possible to meet some of them in future. There were approximately three hundred and fifty-five members in the Region at the end of October, of whom I have only met a handful, although have spoken to quite a number on the phone in the quest for email addresses. Many members without access to email have sent stamps to enable them to receive Newsletters by post as the cost of postage sadly prohibits mailing everyone.

COMMITTEE VACANCIES

Executive Representative

When the 2016 AGM comes around, my current term of office as Executive Representative for 01 Region will come to an end so all members of the Region are invited to seek nomination for this position. This involves three meetings a year at The Open University campus at Milton Keynes, with overnight accommodation at a local hotel (expenses paid) and also attendance at the Annual General Meeting which this year will be on 13th-15th May in the attractive spa town of Buxton in the Peak District National Park (again, expenses paid). The Representative is also required to produce three Newsletters a year with information (and sometimes photographs) about people met and places visited. The meetings enable representatives to exchange news and views with people from other regions and the Officers to discuss AOUG policy as well as providing an opportunity to explore the attractive campus and enjoy social evenings together. Anyone standing for this position needs three assenters who must come from the London Region and nomination forms will be inserted in the Winter OMEGA which will soon arrive on your doormat.

Anyone interested in taking on this interesting and rewarding job can rely on my help and advice and also that of the Officers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Publicity Officer) who during my three years in office have always been available to provide unstinting support despite their own already heavy workload.

Local Contact

London Region does not at present have a Local Contact but any number of members can volunteer, which provides a link between other local members within their small area of the Region. Contacts are asked to arrange at least one event within their locality and pass details to the Executive Representative. These will then be advertised in OMEGA and on the website. They need to ensure they attend their event in person to welcome other members and where possible the Representative will also join the group. It would be helpful to take photos and after the event send brief feedback to the Representative. Local Contacts do not have to stand for election or attend any formal meetings, nor do they need to write formal reports or take on additional responsibilities unless they wish to do so. The role is simply to forge links with other members who live close to them and can sometimes lead to regular coffee mornings/lunches, often at a local pub; additionally with the publication of dates in OMEGA this can attract members to areas previously unknown and un-visited.

Rosemary Hammick
Executive Representative

Diary Dates

Tuesday, 12th January 2016 - 12noon

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

Bookings to Margaret Brett on 020-7387 4975.

Wednesday, 17th February – 11am

Meet Embankment U/G Station (river entrance) for boat from Embankment Pier to Greenwich Pier to visit the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site. Admission is free to the National Maritime Museum and there should be a curator's tour at 1300hrs. The Queen's House will be closed in preparation for the 400th anniversary in 2016 of its commissioning and design (re-opening 4th July 2016) but the Museum's many galleries offer absorbing displays and a selection of fresh food, drinks and snacks can be purchased in the Café Neptune. A range of gifts are available in the shop and visits can be made to the Royal Observatory and to the Cutty Sark, the only surviving tea clipper in the world (admission charges apply for these).

Monday, 14th March – 11am

Meet in the café in the Museum of London (150 London Wall, EC2Y 5HN – nearest U/G Barbican, St Paul's) for a brief tour of some of the fascinating displays and artefacts. There is a charge of £10 for their current exhibition "The Crime Museum Uncovered", containing objects from the Metropolitan Police Crime Museum, so people may wish to make a separate visit for this as

at 12.15pm we reassemble for a short walk to **Barnard's Inn Hall** in High Holborn for a talk entitled **Chelsea Physic Garden through the Ages** by Michael Holland from the Physic Garden. (The talk does not commence until 1pm but it is advisable to arrive early in order to obtain a seat as the Hall has limited capacity.)

[It is hoped to follow up this lecture with a visit to the Physic Garden in the summer.]

(NOTE: Easter Friday-Monday 25th-28th March)

Friday, 1st April – 11am

Meet Tate Britain (Embankment entrance) to renew acquaintance with a few favourite art works before short walk over the river to

Lambeth Palace for rare opportunity to visit garden not normally open to the public (open 12noon-3pm). Admission £4.00. Refreshments. Gift Shop.

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.