



Association of Open University Graduates
Region 02 – The South
Newsletter 5

Firstly, apologies for the omission of Diary Dates for the Portsmouth and South Downs area from the Summer issue of OMEGA. These are:

Thursday 18 October, at 10.45 am Visit to Uppark House (National Trust), South Harting, near Petersfield (GU31 5QR) for guided tour of garden (first) and then lunch and tour of house in afternoon. £8.40, with concessions, or free to National Trust members. If you wish to have a lift, please let me know, as Uppark is rather remote.

Thursday 15 November, at 11.15 am Coffee meeting at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road Portsmouth, PO3 5HS. .

Thursday 20 December 2012, at 12.00 Christmas lunch at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road Portsmouth, PO3 5HS. Parking is free, if a little limited.

In February we'll be going to the new Rowing Museum in Henley-on-Thames, as well as the usual coffee meetings; the diary dates for early 2013 are available on the website, and in OMEGA.

In July a small number of us went to the Diamond Jubilee Concert in Basingstoke – not quite as planned as Lesley Garrett had laryngitis and was unable to sing; the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Alison Balsom and Nicola Benedetti more than compensated for the absence of the star singer.

The choice of dates for open air visits was extremely lucky, as all were rain free; these were to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, near Goodwood, and the Wantage Museum. We also enjoyed fine weather for the morning cruise on the Chichester Canal. There were probably quite a few members on the banks of the Solent on the evening of 3 July, for the 175th Anniversary sail-past of the entire P & O Passenger fleet of 7 ships, which was reviewed by the Princess Royal (although a Red Arrows fly-past was cancelled due to very low cloud).

The Oxford Group had their annual walk on Saturday June 16. This year it was round the historical town of Wantage, birthplace of Alfred the Great. We started from the Vale and Downland Museum, where a music recital was in progress. The Betjeman Millennium Park was particularly enjoyable; the Poet lived in Wantage for many years. In the Park, together with several displays, was a group of five what looked like narrow headstones, on which were engraved apparently meaningless characters. However, if one sat on a strategically placed stone block, it was possible across the five to read John Betjeman's poem *The Last Verse*; JB would have been amused.

On Thursday 6 September the Group visited Dorchester Abbey, Oxfordshire. The Abbey dates back to the 12th century. In 1536 came the dissolution of the Abbey and closure of the monastic house. However, in 1554, it was given to the villagers for their Parish Church, and continues as such. After touring the impressive Abbey, we visited the adjacent Museum, which has exhibits ranging from Neolithic to modern times; the WW2 gas mask brought back memories for some of us!

Jayne Littlejohn and Jill Hellowell were part of the huge number of volunteers at the Olympic Games; it may prove to be an interesting article for OMEGA if we could gather together

experiences of everyone who either went, or participated in one form or another (torchbearing, gamesmaking, ambassadors or even officiating).

In June, I went to the OUSA Conference at Milton Keynes, referred to in OMEGA. This was well attended, and hopefully made many students aware of AOUG and encouraged them to join once they have graduated. My thanks go to those who were present at the degree ceremonies in Milton Keynes, and (in advance) to those joining me for the Portsmouth ceremony in late October. If you would like to process in 2013, please let me know, so that I can pass on your names to our Chairman.

2013 is approaching (hopefully with better weather) and with it the dates for the degree ceremonies. In this Region, they are:

Saturday 6 June, at 2.30pm in the Milton Keynes theatre

Saturday 28 September, at 2.30 pm in the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

If you would like to process at either of these ceremonies, please let me know, and I will pass your names on to our Chairman.

As before, I'd ask that you keep me advised of any changes in your addresses (e-mail or postal); obviously e-mail is the preferred method of contact due to escalating postal costs (contributions towards postal costs will be gratefully received!). I still have one or two members for whom e-mails have 'bounced'; so I'd ask you to forward new e-mail or postal addresses to AOUG and copied to me.

Whilst I am the main point of contact (until 2014), you may also wish to contact

Carol Lamb (carollamb@wordproc.co.uk) Pendarves, High Field Park, Marlow, SL7 2DE (for Berkshire and Buckinghamshire)

or Colin Reed (colin@crv-reed@demon.co.uk) 211 Broadway, Didcot, OX11 8RU (for Oxfordshire and other northern parts of the Region)

Mike Bechley, Executive Representative for Region 02, 2 Westcliff Close, Lee-on-the-Solent, Hampshire PO13 9JS. Home telephone: 023 92552087, mobile 07812915458 (not always on, as coverage is very poor at home)