



Association of Open University Graduates Region 02 – The South

Newsletter 13

Spring 2015

Welcome

If you are a new member of the Association of Open University Graduates, welcome! If you would like anything in particular to be included in this Newsletter or would be willing to set up a local group, please let me know. Please enjoy reading about the social activities that have been organised in the Oxford and Portsmouth areas, courtesy of Colin Reed and Mike Bechley. Hopefully we will see some new faces at our events over the coming months.

The Open University has appointed Peter Horrocks to be its new Vice-Chancellor. Peter is currently the Director of the BBC's World Service, with responsibility for leading the Corporation's international news services across radio, television and online after a career with the BBC spanning more than three decades. Peter will take up his new position on Tuesday 5 May 2015 following a period of induction. Professor Tim Blackman, previously Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research, Scholarship and Quality, has assumed the role of Acting Vice-Chancellor following Martin Bean's departure in December 2014.



Credit: BBC

The Foundation for Education Award Presentation

Just before Christmas I made a presentation to Stuart Monks who had been nominated for the Foundation for Education Award for this Region. Stuart managed to complete his degree despite his own health issues which were compounded by his wife, Heather, being diagnosed with cancer and Stuart having to become her carer and completing much of his studying in hospital waiting rooms. The presentation was made at their local village hall and attended by family including Heather, Stuart's mother and his daughters. I was accompanied by Colin Reed, our local representative for Oxford, and the family laid on a delicious buffet lunch. Also in attendance was Elizabeth Mullett, the Assistant Director Student Services from The Open University in the South, who also said a few words after the presentation. A photographer from The Banbury Guardian was also present and Stuart featured in one their "good news stories" in the Christmas Day edition of the paper.



Photo courtesy of Heather Monks

Summary of Executive Committee Meeting at Milton Keynes

At the meeting on Saturday 7th February the Executive Committee re-appointed Trevor Taylor as our OMEGA Editor for the next twelve months and it was also noted that the Spring edition of OMEGA would be produced in full colour. Lesley Sleigh was re-appointed for the coming year as Company Secretary. Unfortunately due to family commitments, Violet Rook has had to resign as Development Officer and so all her areas of responsibility are now being shared out amongst the remaining four Officers.

Cheryl Cowley, our Clerical Officer, has had a request for a reduction in her hours approved and so from the start of February, Office hours are 10am until 4pm Monday to Friday. You are still able to leave messages on the answer phone when Cheryl is not available, and she will respond to you as soon as is possible on her next working day. It has been approved that AOUG advertise through Reeds Employment Agency for a Clerical Assistant to work just one day a week alongside Cheryl to learn the Office procedures.

The AOUG Foundation for Education Awards for the Regions and Nations are once again to be widely advertised. Nominations for any new graduate who has gained their OU degree within the last twelve months, despite overcoming adversity over and above that of the average student, need to be received at the AOUG Office by 22nd June 2015. Information will also go out in March to all OU research departments to encourage nominations for our AOUG Foundation for Education Research Awards. The presentations for these will take place as usual on the first Friday in October on the OU campus and will be followed by our Annual Foundation Lecture which this year is going to be by Paul Catley, the Head of the OU Law School. Tickets, for any or all of the day, including a buffet lunch, are priced at £10 each and can be obtained from the AOUG Office (01908 653316). If you have never been to the OU campus before, then this is your perfect opportunity to explore the beautiful grounds.

The Officers have had several meetings with the OU over the Winter months and further meetings are in the process of being arranged. All of these seem to present positive support. The new OUSA President, Ruth Tudor, has also met the Officers and it has been agreed that links with AOUG will be included on the OUSA Website. Research is in progress as to AOUG making more use of various electronic communications in order to promote our Association and to provide more fluid communications between members.

The most important function of the Spring EC Meeting is to set the budget for the ensuing year. Money is always extremely tight and priorities for the year have to be agreed. Executive Representatives' budgets increased over the last two years to enable the production of the

Local Newsletters but this has now been reduced back down to just £100 for most areas for the year. You may recall that in the Winter 2014 OMEGA, members' attention was drawn to the ever spiralling cost of sending three Newsletters annually by post. I cannot promise postal versions unless you can help by sending in postage stamps. Please do check that AOUG Office has your current e-mail address so that you do not miss out.

Recent events

Oxford and Area

Portsmouth & South Downs Area

A small group of members visited the SeaCity Museum in Southampton in December. This included a temporary exhibition on the impact of World War I to the local area. The main exhibition is on the Titanic which was very interesting as it focused on the many local people who worked on the ship and for many, subsequently died on it. It includes artefacts belonging to people who sailed on the ship on her maiden voyage from Southampton. A visit to the museum is highly recommended. We finished our visit with lunch in the museum café.

Future events

Portsmouth & South Downs Area

Wednesday 15th April 2015. 11.00 am

Visit to Explosion! Museum, Priddy's Hard, Gosport, PO12 4LE. Explosion! is an award winning museum of naval warfare created within 18th century buildings at the Royal Navy's former armaments depot. The museum is housed in a group of listed buildings which centre around the original powder magazine of 1771. These sit on the edge of a camber basin on the western shore of Portsmouth Harbour, with views across to Port Chester Castle, Whale Island and the Naval Base. Explosion! traces the development of naval armaments from gunpowder to the Exocet missile...but the museum is not just about big bangs! There is no bus service to the museum, but a waterbus operates from the Historic Dockyard in Portsmouth, leaving hourly from 10.15am.

Wednesday 13th May 2015. 11.15 am.

Meet for coffee at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road, Portsmouth Carvery, PO3 5HS. We will be discussing dates for future events and meetings after the summer break.

Local Contact - Portsmouth & Area:

Mike Bechley 023 92552087, Mobile 0781 915458 m.bechley@ntlworld.com

Oxford and Area:

Thursday 19th March 2015. 2.00 pm.

The now traditional Spring Equinox stroll and cream tea. Meet at the gate to Christchurch Meadow, in St Aldates, Oxford, for a leisurely walk. The intention is to finish up at the Mitre at about 2.45 pm, where you can enjoy a cream tea. If the weather is too bad, please go directly to the Mitre, which is at the corner of Turl Street and the High Street.

Thursday 23rd April 2015. 11.00am.

Coffee morning in the Ashmolean Museum's rooftop café. Feel free to stay for one of the lunchtime lectures – no charge!

Thursday 28th May 2015. 11.00am.

Visit to the Bodleian Library's Exhibition "Marks of Genius" in the New Exhibition Room, Weston Library. The Bodleian Library has many individual books and manuscripts which can be called works of genius. From Shakespeare's *First Folio* to the Kennicott Bible, from Handel's *Messiah* to the *Codex Mendoza*. Meet at the Parks Road Entrance, which is opposite the *Kings Arms*. Entry to the Exhibition is free. Afterwards, adjourn to *The Mitre*, corner of Turl Street with the High Street, for lunch.

Saturday 6th June 2015. 11.00am.

Annual Oxford Walk. Meet where Hythe Bridge Street crosses the Canal; this is near to Gloucester Green Bus Station. The intention is to walk along the Thames Canal Path to Wolvercote, then lunch at *The Plough Inn*. After lunch, return along the River Thames; alternatively, catch the No. 6 bus back to Oxford. There is a guide in PDF which you can download from www.oxfordcanalheritage.org for more information on the walk.

Thursday 23rd July 2015. 12.00 noon.

Visit to Blenheim Palace and Gardens, Woodstock, OX20 1PP. This is a return visit for those who have an Annual Pass, and another opportunity for those who missed last year's visit. Car parking is free to visitors. Alternatively, the S3 bus (to Chipping Norton or Charlbury) from Oxford Rail Station or Gloucester Green stops at the Palace gates. A ticket for the Palace, Park & Gardens costs £22.50 for adults or £18.00 for concessions, and may be converted to an Annual Pass for free. Discounted tickets are available from the Tourist Information Centre in Broad Street, Oxford (01865 726871). Entry to Park and Gardens only is £13.50 (adults) or £10.20 (concessions). Meet at the Palace gates.

Friday 21st August 2015. 1.30pm.

Medieval Oxford Themed Guided Walking Tour, with Official Blue or Green Badge Guide. Meet outside the Visitor Information Centre, 15-16 Broad Street. The tour, which starts at 1.45 pm, costs £10.00 (concessions £9.50), covers between 1 and 2 miles and lasts about 2 hours. Although it is possible to buy your ticket on the day, these tours are very popular, so it is advisable to book in advance on www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com/official-tours or in person, but note that fees are non-refundable.

Local Contact - Oxford and Area:

Colin Reed 01235 815548, Mobile 0775 2932 182 (Event days only)
colin@crv-reed.demon.co.uk

Reminder

If you pay your subscription annually using a card or by cheque, it can be very easy to forget your renewal date, so why not discuss this with our Clerical Officer and set up a Direct Debit instead to maintain your membership and ensure that you will always receive your OMEGA and Local Newsletters promptly. Naturally, if you change your postal or e-mail addresses, please inform the AOUG Office. Current Association finances may mean that future Local Newsletters can only be sent out via e-mail so please make sure you don't miss out. If you have not advised the AOUG Office of your latest e-mail address, please would you do so, as this will help considerably or donations of stamps would help in reducing our postal costs and ensure you continue to receive your copy.

Jayne Littlejohn - Executive Representative

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