



Association of Open University Graduates Region 02 – The South

Newsletter 14

Summer 2015

Welcome

If you are a new member of the Association of Open University Graduates, welcome! Please enjoy reading about the social activities that have been organised in the Oxford and Portsmouth areas recently. If you would like us to organise a particular event or visit a particular venue please contact me and I will see what I can do. We look forward to welcoming you at one of our events over the Summer.

Local symbol or motif

Now that all Regions and Nations are producing three Local Newsletters a year, we are looking for ways to develop a more local feel for each of the AOUG areas. Some Executive Representatives are considering more local content and some are experimenting with different layouts or fonts. However what would really make each area's Local Newsletter distinctive would be to have a unique symbol or motif that was representative of the area for that particular Newsletter, in addition to the AOUG logo. Yorkshire has always had a Yorkshire Rose in addition to the AOUG logo and that was an easy choice for those members as there is only Yorkshire within Region 07. However what about Regions or Nations with many counties, what would represent the whole area?

I am therefore asking you to put on your thinking caps and send in suggestions or images to me of any simple design that you think would be suitable to represent the whole of our area which covers from the Channel Islands up to Milton Keynes. I will then consider all suggestions and choose the one that I feel is most suitable and this will appear as our motif on the Winter Newsletter and it might also be used in OMEGA too.

Recent events

Portsmouth & South Downs Area

In April, a small group visited Explosion! Museum in Gosport – this shows the development of naval armament, in a fairly remote part of Gosport due to risk of any unfortunate bang destroying nearby property. The site reached its peak of activity in World War 2 and was closed late in the twentieth century. From here, arms and shells were transported across Portsmouth Harbour to ships of the Royal Navy. **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 delightful camber (slipway) basin on the western shore of Portsmouth Harbour, with views across to Portchester Castle, from where forces sailed to Agincourt. Explosion! traces the development of naval armaments from gunpowder to Exocet and Polaris missiles.**

The displays explore the eighteenth century origins of Priddy's Hard, its historic buildings and earthworks, bringing alive the site's rich history. There's a fascinating social history too, including the story of how 2,500 women worked on the site during its peak in World War II.

It describes the role that Priddy's Hard played in naval operations worldwide for over 200 years, as well as its importance to the local Gosport community, which not only armed the Navy but also fed and watered it. The museum's extensive and unique collection was mostly assembled by superintendents of the former Naval Armaments Depot at Priddy's Hard. If it hadn't been for their foresight, a large slice of naval history would have been lost. Thanks to their efforts the museum boasts an extensive collection which includes small arms, cannon and guns, shells and munitions, mines, torpedoes and modern missiles. There's even an atom bomb, whose ominous hulk meets visitors on arrival.



21st Century Naval Missiles - photo courtesy of Mike Bechley

Oxford and Area

The now traditional Spring Equinox stroll around Christchurch Meadow in Oxford took place in March. A small group of us enjoyed a leisurely stroll around the meadow on a cold but dry day. Unfortunately the sun did not shine on us but we did see some wildlife on our stroll as well as snowdrops and daffodils – confirmation that spring is on its way. Afterwards we all enjoyed a cream tea at The Mitre, as we warmed up after our stroll.

In May we visited the Bodleian Library's Exhibition "Marks of Genius" in the New Exhibition Room, Weston Library. This is the first exhibition to be held in the newly refurbished Weston Library which is to be the permanent new home for the Library's Special Collections. The Bodleian Library has assembled an unparalleled collection of books and manuscripts that can be called works of genius. These include Shakespeare's First Folio, The Kennicott Bible and the Codex Mendoza. The exhibition encompasses works on ancient papyrus to more modern twentieth Century documents. There were books, letters, notes, drawings, maps and the original book cover illustration by JRR Tolkien for 'The Hobbit.' Some are on public display for the first time. We then enjoyed a leisurely lunch at our favourite, Oxford hostelry – The Mitre.



Bodleian Library - photo courtesy of Jayne Littlejohn

Future events

Portsmouth & South Downs Area

Wednesday 17th June 2015. 10.30am.

Visit to Mottisfont House and Gardens, near Romsey, SO51 0LP. There is no public transport and the nearest railway station is Dunbridge, about 1.5 miles away. The house has been crafted from a former priory; the current art exhibition of lithographs form the 1940s and 1950s. The gardens have been developed since Georgian times into the present boardwalk, avenues and the beautiful walled rose garden. Admission £11.50 but free to National Trust members.

Tuesday 21st July 2015. 10.00am.

Visit to Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton, near Chichester, PO18 0EU. The museum consists of over 50 traditional buildings showing life in Southern England over the last 650 years. Admission is £11.00.

Saturday 1st August 2015. 1.15 pm.

HM Dockyard Portsmouth, starboard arena by HMS Victory. The band of HM Royal Marines will be playing an open air concert in the arena. Admission is free if in possession of a valid Dockyard and Naval Museum ticket. Access from Portsmouth Harbour station and interchange.

Wednesday 9th September 2015. 11.00am.

Meet for coffee at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road, Portsmouth PO3 5HS. Lunch will be available afterwards for those who can stay.

Wednesday 14th October 2015. 10.30am.

Visit to Gilbert White's House & the Oates Collections, High Street, Selborne GU34 3JH. Admission is £8.50. Gilbert White was 'the man who got us all bird watching', while the Oates collections show extensive works of the life of Captain Oates and the Scott Antarctic expedition of 1911-1912.

Wednesday 11th November 2015. 11.00am.

Meet for coffee at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road, Portsmouth PO3 5HS. Lunch will be available afterwards for those who can stay.

Wednesday 6th January 2016. 11.45 am for 12.00 noon.

Our annual (very) local AGM and New Year lunch at the Toby Carvery, Copnor Road, Portsmouth PO3 5HS.

Local Contact - Portsmouth & Area:

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Oxford and Area

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.

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.

Saturday 10th October 2015. 12.00 for 12.30pm.

The Autumn Lunch is to be held at *The Mitre*, corner of Turl Street with the High Street. Members and friends from any Region or Nation will be welcome to join us. Please contact Colin Reed on 01235 815548, or by e-mail, as he will need to reserve a table.

Thursday 19th November 2015. 11.00am.

Coffee morning in the Ashmolean Museum's rooftop café, Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2PH.

Thursday 17th December 2015. 11.00am.

Coffee morning in the Ashmolean Museum's rooftop café, Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2PH. It is anticipated that the annual Oxford Christmas Market will be taking place in nearby Broad Street.

Local Contact - Oxford and Area:

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