



**ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES (AOUG)
in the SOUTH WEST (03)**

Newsletter 4

September 2012

I was recently giving some online feedback following a visit to a National Trust property. The National Trust thinks that visitors may be looking for one or more of these from a day out:

- A relaxing social day out with friends and family
- To see major attractions in the area
- To learn something new or to pursue an interest
- To experience fascinating, beautiful or awe-inspiring places
- Food for the soul
- To get an adrenalin buzz.

This made me think about what makes a good AOUG event. Please let me know what you do (or don't!) enjoy. We'd also like suggestions for a special regional event in 2013, as it's the AOUG's 25th anniversary! I travelled down to Exmouth at the end of June and spent a day with AOUG members at A la Ronde and a 'Revivalist' meeting. In this Newsletter there is an article by Ann Reed about that day, also one from Tony Ransom about where he went to celebrate his 60th birthday (I'm sorry there isn't room to include his photos). I'll be putting reports of recent events in Bath and Bristol on the AOUG website at www.aoug.org.uk.

Pam Pearce

A LA RONDE AND POST NAPOLEON FRANCE

Can you imagine a sixteen-sided house with nautical touches, designed on the instructions of two late 18th century spinster cousins to house their collection of objects and mementoes acquired during their decade long Grand Tour? Well, 14 members of the Exeter Group, with the most welcome addition of our 03 area representative Pam Pearce and her husband, visited such a property (now belonging to the National Trust) during the final Friday morning of June. This was A La Ronde on the outskirts of Exmouth.

The Parminter ladies wanted to create a home which would be the perfect setting for their collection, and they chose as the location a plot on the side of the hill overlooking the Exe estuary. They employed men used to working as boat builders and there are numerous nautical touches throughout the house. Many of these are space saving constructions – space being at a premium on board. The central area of the house is in the form of a round hall which is open right to the roof; with all rooms on the ground and first floors situated around the outside of this open central space. Jane and Mary Parminter, who lived on the ground floor, used to follow the sun, moving from room to room around the sixteen sides of the house, so that they could work on beautifying their home, as long as the daylight lasted – hours and months and years of work! The end product is an extraordinary home with fantastic interior decoration which includes a feather frieze, collected from native game birds and chickens, and stuck down with isinglass – completed by the ladies themselves.

On the first floor there is also a shell-covered gallery (apparently with some 25,000 shells) which now is too fragile for members of the general public to visit, but it can be viewed using a touch screen 360 degree virtual tour.

Some members of the group visited The Point in View Chapel – a delightful Nonconformist place of worship built by the cousins with an excellent view over the estuary. But it was also used as a place where Jewish female converts to Christianity could be trained before returning to the Holy Land as missionaries. Some local poor girls also were given an education at the expense of the cousins on the premises (the cousins were acutely aware of how disadvantaged most females were at this time, and conversely how fortunate they were as single women of independent means) ‘Point in View’ therefore having triple meaning!

There was a break for lunch – some used the NT café; while others picnicked at the location for the afternoon ‘Revivalist’ gathering. The talk on this occasion was entitled “France after Napoleon” and was given by the host John Eaton-Terry. This was a most interesting review of the various governments (Bourbon, Napoleonic and Republican) which followed Napoleon’s 2nd and final capture and leading up to the end of the present period of interest for this group i.e.1830. The day concluded with a delightful tea provided by John’s wife, Hazel. The thanks of all present were extended to both host/speaker and hostess!

Ann Reed

GOODWOOD FESTIVAL OF SPEED 2012

It’s my 60th birthday in September. As Sandra and I have watched the event on the television and are keen motorsport fans, we decided that the best way to celebrate my birthday was to go to Goodwood for the 4 days.

We normally fit in during our "breaks" a visit to a house or attraction on the way there and also on the way back. As we had a booked a hotel in Burpham, which was the closest we could get to Goodwood, we visited Petworth House on Wednesday, then carrying on to the hotel afterwards. Grinling Gibbons had produced a number of carvings which are in the Carved Room and, as the pea pods were open in the carving, this meant he had been paid. The picture of Macbeth and the 3 witches in the Drawing Room is deteriorating due to the materials used, so it is very dark - which fits in with the scene. Instead of having an audio tour guide, the National Trust had an audio-visual media guide based on an iphone.

The bedrooms are only open for viewing in the afternoon, so we left the guide at reception for collection after our picnic lunch. The previous owners of the house were always keeping up with the technology; the bathrooms had running water, and there was electricity in the bedrooms. Unfortunately due to the slightly cold weather the deer were nowhere to be seen.

The weather wasn’t too bad at Goodwood for the Festival of Speed. Thursday was quite warm which was good for Lewis Hamilton’s picture with me on the podium and my drive with Sandra up the hillclimb in the Honda Civic which I didn’t break the record for. The Queen’s cars were brilliant and covered vehicles of her father King George VI and the model cars and caravan for Prince Charles and Princess Anne. Sandra was all for going up the hill in her “Maserati”.

Friday was wet and windy to start with especially on the rally stage so we went up and then down again after looking at the rally cars in their shelters in the tractor shuttle. But the Porsche experience was great fun sitting in the front passenger seat with the fantastic air displays by the Red Arrows and the Typhoon in the afternoon at Molecomb and motorbikes doing wheelies up the hill before the Flintwall.

Due to the overnight rain on Friday the rally stage didn’t open until 11.00am on Saturday, a fact which we didn’t find out until we reached the Tractor Shuttle. However we had visited Cathedral Paddock on our way in and saw Sir Stirling Moss coming back into the paddock with his wife in the Jaguar XK120. Before we made our way to the rally stage in the afternoon we saw Murray Walker and Sir Stirling Moss signing their "Scrapbooks", I abseiled down the wall at the Chevrolet stand and we watched the cavalcade of the Queen’s cars followed by a fireworks display to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. Due to a

mistake in the programme, we missed the start of the Tornados' display whilst on the Tractor Shuttle for the rally stage, where we walked taking numerous photos of the scenery as well as cars on stage.

With Sunday being the busiest day, we had to queue for the slip road which wasn't helped by queue jumpers. That being said we were only 15 minutes later getting in than the previous 3 days. We tried and failed to win tickets for the Olympics in BP's quiz by not being fast enough on the buzzer. We also had a go on the Land Rover Experience. Although it was quite crowded we were lucky to get a spot by the Bridge giving us the ideal place for photos of cars up the straight during the timed runs. As the Mercedes stand had over ordered on the catering we were given pieces of Dundee fruit cake on the way out which we had with a cuppa later.

As I said at the start we aimed to visit an attraction on the way home. So after breakfast on Monday we visited the Roman Villa at Bignor. I had visited the site about 40 years ago on a college trip when I was studying for an ONC in Engineering. But it was worth seeing it again as Sandra had never been to it. Although the various mosaics are in buildings, it makes you wonder how many other Roman artefacts there are still undiscovered at the site. The Villa has grown in size quite considerably since its inception with a cold plunge pool, barn and rooms added.

Tony Ransom

PROCESSING AT THE 2013 TORQUAY DEGREE CEREMONY

Next year's ceremony is on Saturday, 20th April at the Riviera Centre, Torquay. Please contact me if you would like to represent the AOUG, especially if you haven't done it before.

NOMINATION OF AOUG MEMBER FOR HONORARY MEMBERSHIP IN 2013

Do you know an AOUG member who you think is worthy of receiving honorary membership in 2013? Please state their name, region or nation and reason for nomination in 100 to 150 words and send in to AOUG office AOUG@open.ac.uk by 1st October 2012 (don't mention to them that they've been nominated).

ANNUAL AOUG FOUNDATION LECTURE

Friday, 5th October 2012 at 2pm, at OU Campus, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, Dr James Bruce, Senior Lecturer in Chemistry, will present 'A Little Light Chemistry'. The AOUG Research Faculty Award Ceremony precedes it at 12 noon, followed by a Buffet Lunch. Tickets are £8, including Award Ceremony and Buffet Lunch, from AOUG Office.

LearningSpace

LearningSpace gives you the chance to try free online courses from the Open University. Look out for a brand new design this Autumn at <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/>

DIARY DATES

Bath and Wiltshire Group:

Wednesday 19th September. 11.30am:

Guided tour of Swindon and Wiltshire History Centre, Cocklebury Road, Chippenham SN15 3QN. Lunch at the Brasserie or bring your own picnic lunch to eat in the Foyer (drinks machine available).

Wednesday 24th October. 11.00am:

Meet in the Museum Restaurant, Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum, The King's House, 65 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2EN for a led walk around Salisbury - then lunch (optional)

Saturday 27th October. 12 noon:

Lunch at the Royal Pavilion Restaurant, Victoria Park, Bath BA1 2NR. (Roger and Pauline Galea)

Saturday 17th November. From 11.00am:

Keynsham Day

You are invited to join the day at any point. In the morning local resident and historian Alan Byrom leads a walk around historic Keynsham. Gather in the Baptist Church Coffee shop on the High Street at 11am. We have our walk, then lunch in the Talbot Inn, Bath Road with its wide menu. In the afternoon we take in another area of this old market town.

Bristol Group:

Monday, 17th September. 6.30 – 7.30pm :

Foyles Bristol literary event at 6 Quakers Friars, Cabot Circus, Bristol BS1 3BU (Bristol Festival of Ideas.) Old China's Secret Worlds Revealed, Robert Bickers and Paul French.

<http://www.foyles.co.uk/Public/Events/Detail.aspx?eventId=1624> This is a free event, but you need to pre-book by reserving places at <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/event/3994234864> .

Thursday 29th November. Meet at 7pm for 7.30pm Pub meal at the Old Farmhouse, Trendlewood Way, Nailsea, BS48 2PF.

Cornwall Group:

A Garden Visit, Book Club and Lunch normally take place every month. Liz is away at the moment, so no events are planned until the beginning of October.

Exeter Group:

Friday 28th September. Meet at 12 noon:

Bi-monthly lunch at 12.30pm at the Countess Wear Beefeater Restaurant, 398 Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 6HE.

Friday 12th October. 2.30pm:

Sharing & Discussing Poetry, Prose & Drama, venue Honiton.

Friday 26th October. 10 am:

South Molton Museum

Friday 30th November. 10.30 am:

Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter, then meet at 12.30 pm for Festive Luncheon at Rougemont Hotel, Exeter

Friday 25th January. Meet at 12 noon

Bi-monthly lunch at 12.30pm at the Countess Wear Beefeater Restaurant, 398 Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 6HE.

Friday 22nd February. 2.30pm

Talk on Astronomy by Justin Olver, venue Lypstone.

An evening in March. To be confirmed.

A Visit to the Norman Lockyer Observatory, Nr Sidmouth

Please contact Ann Reed for further details of the Exeter Group events.

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Thank you to those of you who have sent me your email addresses or stamps to reduce our costs.

Pam Pearce
Executive Representative