



Association of Open University Graduates Region 04 West Midlands

Edition 13

Spring 2016

Welcome to our Spring Local Newsletter. There's lots to fit in this time and as we, hopefully, start to approach the better weather, there are more events planned for you to get involved in too.

The Spring edition also reminds us that we are once again approaching our annual Social Weekend and AGM.

Philip Evans
Executive Representative



Above: A photograph I took during last year's Social Weekend looking across Caernarfon harbour

Advance Notice:

Friday 7th October 2016

**AOUG Foundation for
Education Research Awards**

Followed by

AOUG Foundation Lecture

**"An Astronomer's view of the Birth, the Life and
the Death of the Stars"
to be given by Glenn White,
Professor of Astronomy**

**£10 for full or part day including a buffet lunch -
Admission by ticket or invite only.**

**Tickets available from AOUG Office
aoug@open.ac.uk or 01908 653316**

*"If you have never been to the OU campus before,
then this is your perfect opportunity to explore the
beautiful grounds."*

Vacancy?

When you receive your Spring copy of OMEGA you will receive your voting papers for this year's AGM.

You will notice that I am standing in the by-election for Development Officer (for the remaining one year in the current term-of-office). If I am elected, this would leave an immediate vacancy for the position of Executive Representative of Region 04, similarly for the final one year until elections are next due in 2017.

**Would you be willing to be
co-opted to serve until May 2017?**

This might be the perfect opportunity to see if this is something for you with the knowledge it is only for one year.

Please contact me if you'd like to know more, without committing yourself!

New Year's Dinner

I thank Mohammad Motawalla for once again organising our annual New Year's Dinner. This year we met at the Novotel Hotel in Wolverhampton. Here are some photographs of the event.



Three photographs above: Provided by Philip Evans

Left: Photograph taken by Mohammad Motawalla

Joke Corner

Teacher: I want you to tell me the longest sentence you can think of
Pupil: Life imprisonment!

Summer Meal

I have organised for us to have our Summer Meal again at The Malt House on Saturday 20th August. You can see their menu at <http://www.taylor-walker.co.uk/pub/malt-house-birmingham/p0937/menu/>

Forthcoming visit to Hill Close Gardens

Hill Close Gardens in Warwick are described by their website as "Rare survivals of Victorian gardens once used by townfolk living above their business to escape from the crowded town".

Over time the gardens became neglected to the point that in the early 1990s they were largely derelict and had been sold for development. However, local pressure saw the national importance of the site recognised and the gardens were allowed to remain. In 2000, Warwick District Council helped set up a Trust to manage and restore the site. You can learn more at <http://hillclosegardens.com/>

Fund raising for the AOUG Foundation for Education charity

Every year the Association's own charity offers nine Awards to Research students, in their final year, who have been nominated by OU staff from their Faculty or Research Centre and they go forward for consideration to be selected to receive an Award. The successful recipients are then presented with their Awards at a prestigious Ceremony on the OU campus on the first Friday in October. Each Award comprises of a framed certificate and a cheque for £300. Occasionally a Bursary is also offered and although they can be nominated by their supervisors as with the Awards, research students also have the option to self-nominate. These Bursaries usually offer a monetary Award of £1,000 in addition to their framed certificate. This money is not to be used as a grant to complete their Research project but it can be used in any way the recipient wishes in order to develop their research further than originally planned, be it extending the area of research, attending a conference, or publishing papers.

AOUG Foundation for Education also funds Awards for new graduates in the Regions and Nations who have gained their first degree whilst overcoming adversity over and above that of the average student. There have been some amazing new graduates nominated for these Awards and during 2015 seventeen such Awards were approved. These new graduates received £100 along with their framed certificate.

However, in order to continue presenting these Awards each year, AOUG has to ensure that there are sufficient funds to cover them and this is where you come in as these Awards rely on the generosity of you, the members, as it is mainly your donations (with a little help from bank interest) that enables us to continue with this good work. You will see in the Spring OMEGA that we are offering an AOUG 2016 Ted Castle Bursary this year and you can therefore make a special donation of as much as you like, or as little as one pound, in memory of Ted or any other deceased AOUG member that was dear to your heart. Or you might consider making an annual covenant to help ensure that this good work is able to continue for many more years.

Your ideas wanted!

Following the Executive Committee meeting in February, the Committee had a workshop to discuss ideas for other ways to raise funds for the AOUG Foundation for Education. Do you have any ideas?

Ideas don't have to be fully worked out. Just suggesting one might help lead to other ideas so please let us know!

Forthcoming visit to Ludlow Castle

In June I have organised for us to visit Ludlow Castle, in the beautiful Shropshire market town of Ludlow.

The castle itself is a fascinating ruin, with its origins to be found in the turbulent times following the Norman conquest. The castle is situated between the rivers Teme and Corve and stands on high ground to help it resist attacks from Welsh invaders. There is much history to learn about, including the castle's royal connections. After exploring the castle, there's plenty more to see in the mediaeval town centre too.



Above: Looking across the castle's Outer Bailey towards the town centre. Photograph taken by Philip Evans, July 2014.

Region 04 Directory

AOUG Office		AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA	01908 653316 aoug@open.ac.uk
Executive Representative	Philip Evans	70 Bromyard Road, St. Johns, Worcester, WR2 5DA	01905 428667 AOUG.Philip@gmail.com

Events' Contacts:

Tea & Coffee Mornings	Mohammad Motawalla	12, Tong Court, Boscobel Crescent, Wolverhampton. WV1 1QQ	01902 771328 or 07825 645997 mamotawalla@yahoo.co.uk
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Diary Dates

Saturday 25th June. 12noon

Ludlow Castle

Meet at the entrance to Ludlow Castle, Castle Square, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1AY. We will have lunch in the castle's Tea Room and then afterwards explore this fascinating mediaeval castle. Usual admission charges apply (adults £5, senior/student £4.50), which will be paid on the day. Please contact Philip Evans for more information or to notify of your intention to attend. More information about Ludlow Castle is available at www.ludlowcastle.com

Saturday 23rd July. 12noon

Hill Close Gardens

Meet at the entrance to Hill Close Gardens, Bread and Meat Close, Warwick, CV34 6HF where we will explore the restored gardens, which offer an extremely rare opportunity to visit sixteen hedged Victorian pleasure gardens. There is a small café where we can have lunch. Usual admission charges apply (adults £4) which will be paid on the day. Please contact Philip Evans for more information or to notify of your intention to attend. More information about the gardens is available at www.hillclosegardens.com

Saturday 20th August. 12.30pm

Summer Meal

Meet at The Malt House, 75 King Edwards Road, Birmingham, B1 2NX (next to Symphony Hall, overlooking the canal) for our Summer Meal. Standard menu prices apply. Booking is essential – please contact Philip Evans for more information or to reserve a place (before 13th August).

Your ideas for places to visit or other events are always welcome. Please drop me an email, give me a ring or post any leaflets to me.

Philip Evans
Executive Representative—Region 04