



ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES in EAST MIDLANDS

EDITION 10

SUMMER 2015

Recent Events

In mid-April, on a sunny day, some of our members met for a scenic ride on a steam train through the Nene Valley, near Peterborough. This was a Handshake event with Region 06 and we had time to chat as we travelled through the countryside. Following the AOUG Foundation for Education Award being presented at the OU Nottingham Regional Centre, our Region was invited to use a room at their venue for meetings, therefore I arranged for a talk in May on the history and uses of the caves in Nottingham. This talk replaced the advertised one on 1066, as the speaker was unable to keep the date due to urgent family commitments.

Future Events

As a Handshake Event with Region 07, we have been invited to join their members for a visit to Eyam – the famous plague village - which around 1665 closed itself off from the rest of the world in order to save surrounding areas. There is a very interesting museum by the coach park and we can visit Eyam House – currently the sole property on loan to the National Trust. I hope that the weather will be kind for a visit to the Heckington Show which has a food hall, heavy horses at work and many sideshows. The Saturday closes with a grand firework display.

On 15th August there is a visit to Conisbrough Castle, near Doncaster. The property, built around 1180, is owned by English Heritage and contains various exhibits. Then the following week there is a Battle of Bosworth Anniversary re-enactment weekend at the Bosworth Heritage Centre to celebrate the events of 1485, when Richard, Duke of York, battled with the house of Lancaster's King Henry VI. I am hoping that AOUG members, with family and friends, might form a party there for what appears to be a most interesting event.

This month a brand new museum, entitled 'National Civil War Centre' opened in Newark and I am waiting for more information as we might arrange a visit later in the year. Also I am on a mailing list covering events in Lincoln and I have just received notification that in celebration of the Magna Carta, the city have set up the Lincoln Baron's Charter Trail consisting of twenty eight sculptures of giant barons placed around the city – sounds well worth a visit

AGM and Social Weekend

Many members have just returned from the AOUG AGM held at a very good hotel near Caernarfon Castle in North Wales. At the AGM, reports were presented by the various Officers, and the Treasurer reported that income over the last year was slightly lower than the previous year but reserves had been maintained. The only member's Resolution was one submitted by me. This was a proposal that a majority vote would be required to remove an ineffective committee member from post. It was passed.

In her address, the Chairman explained that at a recent meeting with the printers, it was decided to give OMEGA variations in its design as well as full colour. With regard to OU relationships, meetings continue to take place between Officers and senior members of the OU staff. At a recent Charter Day event, (now held annually to celebrate the birthday of the university), AOUG Officers met the new Vice Chancellor, Peter Horrocks. Mention was also made about the greater use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter and the newly initiated Corporate Facebook site. Some Officers had also met the new OUSA President, Ruth Tudor, who appeared very receptive to AOUG links with her Association. It was also agreed that Karen Bradbury, recently retired from the OU Estates, should be granted Honorary Life Membership of AOUG in recognition of many years of support to our Association.

Association News

Social Media

AOUG have resisted the use of social media for a long time, due to concerns over the possible content and the time involved for monitoring. However now there are more opportunities for pre-setting controls and especially with 'Corporate' sites rather than personal sites, the safeguards are much greater. Thus since Social Media is the favoured method of communication for the majority of people in today's world, AOUG must move with the times.

Thus a few weeks ago, our Treasurer set up a Corporate Facebook page and then very recently, our Chairman launched a Corporate Twitter account. Both of these are open to members and non-members and are monitored by the Officers. The intention is to raise the profile of AOUG amongst people who might otherwise not have heard of us. Then it is hoped that after a period of interaction through these mediums, that any OU graduates that we have reached may decide to view our website. The ultimate goal is to encourage them to join our organisation. In order for this to happen, the social media interactions must firstly be pitched appropriately but even more important is that our own website must be completely up to date at all times and be interesting enough to inspire them to join up. Then once these people have joined us, we need to ensure that all communications inspire them to keep involved with AOUG for the future.

Thus you now have several electronic opportunities to engage directly with AOUG:

- the AOUG website aoug.org.uk managed by our Publicity Officer.
- the special 'Members Only' Forum (with an additional Executive Committee section) which can be found by clicking on the word Forum either in the top menu, or in the band at the bottom of the AOUG website Home Page, and creating your own password for future access.
- Corporate Facebook – You can find this through your own Facebook account if you have one and typing in **Association of Open University Graduates** or if you do not as yet have a Facebook account, your direct link is using <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Association-of-Open-University-Graduates/710287149081499>
- Corporate Twitter – You can view the Twitter page by going to <https://twitter.com/theaoug> and it will ask you if you want to register for an account. However if you click on the cross this box disappears and you can view the page. If you have your own Twitter account you can find us on **@TheAOUG**

We would like as many as possible to get involved with these electronic communications but you can of course continue to write to us by 'snail mail' or phone the AOUG Office **01908 653316**.

Awards for the Regions and Nations

AOUG are once again offering Awards to any new graduates who, having gained their degree in the last twelve months, have maintained their study whilst undergoing some form of adversity that would be classed as greater than that of the average student. There must be hundreds of students who continued to study whilst dealing with major life changes either for themselves or the people they care for, and it is these people that AOUG seeks to recognise through our Awards. Although self-nomination cannot be accepted, we welcome nominations from any other OU students, OU graduates or OU staff, so please if you know someone yourself, nominate them now, or spread the word to anyone else who might know of a suitable candidate. A copy of the application form is attached.

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 Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. 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.

Contact Details

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Executive Committee Meeting Feedback

The Executive Committee met in Caernarfon, after the AGM meetings, for what was the one hundredth meeting and the Vice-Chairman treated us all to celebration cake at our coffee break. The meeting welcomed Margaret Stobirski, Pam Pearce, Ramsey Hertzog and Jean McKenna back to the Committee and received the Resolutions passed at the AGM before progressing to other business. Marian Corns was co-opted as the new Executive Representative for the North West (08) but unfortunately there were no other nominations for co-options to any of the other vacant positions.

Other News

At a recent Degree Ceremony I purchased a new book by Daniel Weinbren, a Fellow in History at the OU. The book carries the title "The Open University – a History" and I am working my way through it. Speaking of Jennie Lee, Michael Young says 'The Open University was built by one person, though she had many able lieutenants and one ace card – the direct support of the prime minister' The book cost £12 and is available through OUSA www.open.ac.uk/ousa/shop

Diary Dates

Saturday 11th July 11am

Meet at the entrance of Eyam Hall, Main Street, Eyam, Derbyshire S32 5QW for a Handshake event organised by Yorkshire members to explore the Hall and Gardens. Admission is £7.40 for an adult (£3.70 for children or free for National Trust members with your card. There is also a Craft Centre and Buttery Café where homemade cakes and light lunches are available. Please note the car park is on the opposite side of the road to the Craft Centre. Members are invited to join us to learn more about this famous plague village.

Saturday 25th July. 12noon

Meet at the Boston Road entrance to the Heckington Show, Hall Grounds, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG34 9JF, reputedly the largest such show in the country. The village is midway between Sleaford and Boston just south of the A17 road. There will be marquees, trade stands and various animals such as Heavy Horses being demonstrated. Later in the day members may wish to stay for music and fireworks. One of our members is the President of the show. An entry fee is applicable.

Saturday 15th August. 11.30am

Meet at the 'Meet and Eat' café, 56 Church Street, Conisbrough Castle, South Yorkshire, DN12 3BU, off the A630, about four miles Southwest of Doncaster. Probably built prior to 1180, now owned by English Heritage there are interesting audio-visual presentations and exhibits on the various floors. Entry cost £4.70, with concessions available. This is a Handshake event into Region 07.

Saturday 22nd August. 11am

Meet at the Restaurant of the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, Sutton Cheney, CV13 0AD for the annual re-enactment. Prices are cheaper if booked on line through www.bosworthbattlefield.com before 31st July 2015 with an entrance fee of £12.00 (increasing to £15.00) or £10.40 concessions (increasing to £13.00).