



## **ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES in THE EAST OF ENGLAND**

**EDITION 7**

**NOVEMBER 2015**

Can it really be eighteen months since the glorious sunshine of the weekend of our 2014 AGM in St. Albans? I have to admit that that was my first visit to St. Albans since my parish church in London organised a visit there in the 1950s!! Since then, we have had another AGM in Wales and preparations are well under way for the 2016 AGM in Buxton, Derbyshire, in Region 05. Please look out for more details and the booking form in the next OMEGA.

### **Events in Region 06**

I am really pleased that since the Executive Representative for Region 06 stepped down, events have continued to happen in the area. My thanks go to the Chairman for organising the event in Colchester and to the Executive Representative for Region 05 for organising Handshake events. The regular meetings at the Peahen continue and, if you are in the St. Albans area, and have not managed to join other members for coffee and/or lunch yet, please give it a try. If you are in the south of Region 06, you might also like to check out the Diary Dates in OMEGA for Region 01 – London. If any of their events are of interest, please contact the Executive Representative for the Region. Do remember that you are welcome to join events in any Region or Nation and you are also welcome to attend events with family or friends. I regularly take grandchildren or great-grandchildren with me to suitable events.

Do you have a local coffee shop where you like to go for a tea or coffee? If you fix a date and time in the early part of the New Year, it could be advertised in the next Newsletter and on the website. You might meet other local members or at least enjoy a cup of something. Please think about it and contact me!!

**Lesley Sleigh – Vice Chairman**

### **AGM and Social Weekend in Buxton**

The 2016 AGM will be held from 13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> May in Buxton, Derbyshire. The Buxton venue of the Palace Hotel is very close to the station and within easy walking distance of the Opera House, Buxton Pavilion and the surrounding gardens and the town. It is ideally placed for the arranged optional excursions to Poole Cavern, Chatsworth House and Gardens and the plague village of Eyam but there are so many beautiful areas to see and places to visits that it is well worth booking a few extra nights to really explore. This venue should be of special interest to anyone who likes walking as the surrounding countryside of the Peak District has excellent walking opportunities. So if you have never attended an AGM before, 2016 could be the time to come and meet fellow members.

## **Summary of May Executive Committee Meeting:**

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 a 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. Marion Corns was co-opted as the new Executive Representative for the North West (Region 08) but, unfortunately, there were no other nominations for co-options to any of the other vacant positions.

Attendees not on the Executive Committee enjoyed the excursion to the Slate Museum at nearby Llanberis.

## **Summary of July Executive Committee Meeting:**

At the July meeting, after all the official reports, one of the main items of information was relating to the AOUG Foundation for Education Awards. It was reported that five of the nine Research Awards had been approved for this year and that there had been twenty two nominations for the Awards for the Regions and Nations. These latter Awards are given to new graduates who have managed to gain their OU degree whilst overcoming adversity, over and above that of the average student, and seventeen of these nominations were accepted as having passed the criteria and worthy of recognition.

Information was also given relating to a meeting that the Officers had held with Lucian Hudson, Director of Communications, and Becca Mills, also from the OU Communications Department.

## **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.

So a few months ago, our Treasurer set up a Corporate Facebook page and then 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, 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](http://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 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](https://www.facebook.com/AssociationofOpenUniversityGraduates) 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 - Once 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.

## OMEGA

As I am sure you will have noticed, our magazine, OMEGA, has undergone some changes and we would love to hear what members think about them. Our aim was to make OMEGA brighter, more colourful and interesting. Only you, our members, can decide if we have succeeded, and we will only know your opinions if you let us know. We have already had some positive feedback, but everyone's views are important. Please send yours to the AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA or [aoug@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk).

### **Local symbol or motif:**

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, or even many countries?

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 East of England. In the Winter OMEGA, there will be an emblem for Cambridge, but if I get several good ideas, they could be rotated.

### **Your chance to have your say!**

The Winter OMEGA will have three double sided inserts this time – the usual AGM Booking form (with the excursion booking on the reverse this time), a volunteering form to either process at a Degree Ceremony in 2016 or to be part of the AOUG 'Meet and Greet' team helping at the AOUG stand to welcome new graduates and their families, and then the Nomination form to stand for election to the Executive Committee. However on the back of this latter form, there will also be a survey to express your opinions about the Association itself and an opportunity to add additional information about your ideas for the future direction of the Association. However if you wish to propose a more immediate change, you can also put forward a Resolution to change our regulations or a Procedural Motion as to how things should progress for consideration by the rest of the membership.

**Lesley Sleight – Vice-Chairman**

## AOUG Foundation for Education:



On the Friday of the Executive Committee Weekend in October, the Association traditionally hosts a special Award Ceremony for research students who have been nominated by their Faculties or Research Centres as worthy of recognition. This year five of the nine available Awards were presented and each of these students was introduced by their Supervisors or Head of Departments with glowing praise for their dedication in their particular field of study. Each student receives a framed certificate and a cheque from AOUG Foundation for Education but none of this would be possible without the kind donations of AOUG members. AOUG Foundation for Education is a registered charity and needs a total of £4,200 a year in order to be able to fund the maximum number of Awards we offer to both these research students and for the new graduates adversity Awards. The Association would therefore like you to consider making a small donation to ‘AOUG Foundation for Education’. You can give as much or as little as you wish as just £1 from each member would be a tremendous support and if you are a tax payer, remember to offer to Gift Aid your donation to increase the benefit even further.

### Diary Dates

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 10.30am**

Meet at the Peahen, 14, London Road, St Albans, AL1 1NQ for coffee and/or a light lunch.

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 12 noon**

Meet at the Peahen, 14, London Road, St Albans, AL1 1NQ for a festive lunch and discussion about future events.

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January 10.30am**

Meet at the Peahen, 14, London Road, St Albans, AL1 1NQ for a coffee and/or a light lunch.

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 10.30am**

Meet at the Peahen, 14, London Road, St Albans, AL1 1NQ for a coffee and/or a light lunch.

### Contact Details

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