



ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATES in YORKSHIRE



NEWSLETTER 66*

SPRING 2013

“BRING A THING!” – “WHAT SHALL I BRING?”
On Saturday 16th February to Wesley Methodist Chapel, Harrogate

Well anything really, at least anything that is significant to you and that you can talk about for five to ten minutes. In 2011 we had a “Bring a Thing” event in the home of one of the members and each member attending brought something to talk about. Items were wide ranging but each had a story to tell, and each was fascinating in a different way.

First a circle of plastic was presented and its owner began a tale of being in Los Angeles at a craft fair, selling her items, when an earthquake warning sounded and all were evacuated from the hall. A while later, she had remembered that she had left her takings behind in the hall and desperate to retrieve them, she entered the hall again to find the floor covered in lots of these small plastic circles – dislodged from the light fittings above, by the earthquake. She pocketed one of these and has kept it ever since to remind her of her lucky escape from the earthquake.

Another “thing” was a family letter which seemed to tell a story of fate as although it bore an invitation, (which had at the time been refused), for the owner as a child to move to live in a new area, the owner is now living very close to the original destination. Next was a rotten apple, a strange thing to have significance to its owner but which told the story of his passion for the work of Caravaggio, the first painter to show life really as it was, with all the blemishes of life rather than the idealised versions of previous times.

Then a wooden box with “1802” carved roughly into one side and “T. Stokes aged 11” into the other. The owner told a tale of Industrial England when families could escape the workhouse with factory work and the 1801 Act that introduced a few hours of compulsory basic education for factory children and the lucky ones from Sheffield and Manchester who received sessions of craftwork as well as the three Rs. The owner of this box, who had recently inherited it, knew it had been in her Manchester family for many generations, and fantasised of this box having been made by one of those factory children who was first given craftwork schooling. Finally the last member laid a butterfly clasp on the table and challenged all attending to say what it was. Various ideas were put forward for its use but none guessed its origin as being a Victorian skirt clasp for ladies to lift their skirts to protect them from the filth in the dirty streets.

A really varied and interesting set of stories that were so enjoyed that we just had to repeat the theme for a wider audience, so now with the opportunity of many new objects – what “thing” will you bring?

Meet from 10.00am for coffee before the talks and then stay for a “Bring your own Lunch” followed by the afternoon General Saturday Discussion Meeting.

**NB – Winter 2012 was incorrectly numbered – It should have been 65 – Apologies from Jean Hertzog - Newsletter Editor.*

Executive Representative's Report.

Where did 2012 go? - And now we are already more than one month into 2013. I hope that the snow and subsequent rain has not caused you too many difficulties. Foolishly, I managed to fall down some outside steps at the house of one of my granddaughters, but the bumps and bruises are healing. Last year brought me two new great-grandsons, Benjamin and Albie, but I hope that the family will stop growing now.

My grateful thanks to the anonymous member, who kindly sent me twelve second class stamps. I cannot even guess where they came from as the envelope was not franked, but I cut off the unused stamp, so 'Thank you' for thirteen stamps. We also received a donation of cash to buy stamps from a member. All these contributions are gratefully received. All the other Regions and Nations are now sending out three Newsletters a year, so something we in Yorkshire have been used to, is now being extended throughout our organisation.

At Association level, we are still using our imagination to try and find alternative methods of recruitment of new members. In Yorkshire we are still trying to find a way of seeking a winner for our annual YOUGET Award. YOUGET is our Yorkshire charity to which donations can be made at any time.

This year, AOUG celebrates its 25th Anniversary. We are aiming to celebrate the occasion in Yorkshire with an event on the Leeds-Liverpool canal from Skipton. It would be lovely to meet you at this event on 7th September.

My three year term of office as your Executive Representative comes to an end in May so when the ballot paper is distributed in the next OMEGA, I would urge you to vote for my nominated successor, Derrick Franks. Even though there is only one candidate, it is encouraging to know that you have the support of members. The Association AGM this year is in Walsall from May 17th to 19th.and let me remind you that the booking form was in the Winter OMEGA .but if you have lost it, then ring or e-mail the AOUG Office 01908 653316 or aoug@open.ac.uk and ask for another copy. We always have a good number attending from Yorkshire, ten have booked so far, but it would be lovely to see even more Yorkshire members there. Please join us for all, or part, of the weekend.

Lesley Sleigh

Executive Committee Feedback

The February Executive Committee weekend has just taken place and numerous issues were discussed. This is our 25th Anniversary year and so many things are being planned to celebrate. Each Region or Nation is holding at least one celebratory event and the Association itself plans has several extra touches to make the AGM in Walsall special. The 2014 AGM venue has been decided and will be in St Albans with 2015 to be in Wales and 2016 in East Midlands. Then this Autumn, there is to be a Formal Dinner and we shall report full details in the next Newsletter.

This year AOUG are adding a Bursary in memory of our Founder Olga Camm to the list of Awards we present. Awards are also being advertised for new graduates.

Hopefully we shall find a suitable recipient for a Yorkshire Award and maybe if several are nominated, we might find a second for our own YOUGET Award

Chairman`s Letter:

How time flies. It seems no time at all since I submitted my contribution to the last Newsletter. The social events, for the final quarter of 2012, commenced on 20th October, with members meeting at the Friends Meeting House, in York. We were entertained by Clive Dawson, a volunteer member of the Friends of York Cemetery, who talked, and gave a power-point presentation on the ‘Gardens and History of York Cemetery’. All in attendance expressed their appreciation for what was a very interesting topic, and I am sure, like me, left the meeting more knowledgeable about the seasonal variations of the flora in the cemetery and the damage that disease could inflict on that flora.

24th October saw members converging on Doncaster Dome for what was to have been a Ten Pin Bowling Challenge Match between OUSA and AOUG. Alas the turnout was very low, due in no small measure to the weather conditions. Nevertheless the number of attendees, and friends, were adequate to make up teams and matches were played and enjoyed - The various degrees of skill between the players contributing to the atmosphere.

Disappointingly we were not able to make the proposed journey to Amsterdam in 2012 due to special deals we had benefited from previously, not being available this time, so the Café Rouge, Sheffield was the place for members to congregate on 17th November before embarking on a tour of the Millennium Galleries.

The final social event of the year, on 1st December, was a visit to the West Yorkshire Playhouse where members met in the restaurant for lunch before attending the Matinee performance of the ‘Wind in The Willows’. An energetic production with a double revolve stage serving to create the river, road or canal on the outside with the various other settings of the river bank, the wild wood and so on in the centre. Members were especially taken with the horse and his strong Birmingham accent which somehow just suited the character.

So finally, I should tell you that I am standing to take over as Executive Representative for Yorkshire but before Lesley Sleigh finishes her term, can I offer her all our thanks for the last three years of hard work and to all members I send a belated wish for Happy New Year.

Derrick Franks.

Yorkshire`s Anniversary Event – 7th September - Canal trip from Skipton
Contact Jean Hertzog jrhertzog@hotmail.com if you would like to be part of the Yorkshire Group Anniversary celebration on Saturday 7th September as the actual canal option will depend on the numbers interested. Full details will be on www.aoug.org.uk on the Yorkshire Diary Date page shortly.

AOUG Trading announces special silver nickel 25th Anniversary items.
The Association currently has on order, a selection of silver nickel merchandise to sell in celebration of our 25th Anniversary year. New silver coloured membership badges, tie pins, stick pins and cufflinks are currently in production and so even if you cannot get to events, why not join in our Silver Anniversary celebrations by buying and wearing some of these new items which will be advertised in the Spring OMEGA and shortly on the AOUG website.

YORKSHIRE WALKERS

AOUG has now been going for twenty five years and all of that time Yorkshire's beautiful countryside has offered so many opportunities to get out and explore that AOUG in Yorkshire developed a very strong walking group. Ginny Finney, the group co-ordinator, and the rest of the group, are always welcoming to new members but over recent years, there seems to have developed two groups of Yorkshire members, those who walk and those who attend other activities. We want to change this and encourage non-walkers to start walking again. Ginny and her other dedicated organisers have arranged two taster walks in March – one just 2 miles and the other 6-7 miles so why not come along and try one or both of these.

EXPLORE THE COW AND CALF AREA OF ILKLEY **See the poems carved into the Stanza Stones and the Geology Trail** **Sunday 24th March**

Based around the Stanza stones, these are part of a watershed walk - organised via Ilkley Literature Festival: <http://www.ilkleyliteraturefestival.org.uk/test/stanza-stones-trail-guide/>

Start from, and return to, the **Cow and Calf car park** (NGR SE133 467 OL27). The cafe here opens its toilets to the public, but you are asked to make a 40p donation if you haven't purchased anything from the cafe. However, we plan to have lunch at **1.00 pm just across the road at the Cow and Calf inn**, so you may prefer to park here. If you prefer there's plenty of parking off-road around this area. <http://www.vintageinn.co.uk/thecowandcalfilkley/>

Morning Walk - 'Puddlestone' and back: Meet Ilkley Cow and Calf car park 9.15am

6 -7 miles: For those reasonably active who used to walk or just never got around to getting involved, this walk goes to the Twelve Apostles, the Landshaw Lad (and possibly Lass), the trig point and the Puddlestones. The route is a variety of moorland path, well-trodden tracks and newly laid hard stone paths. As it is nesting time for ground birds, please keep any dogs on a lead throughout the walk - you may prefer to leave them at home. Bring a flask for a coffee stop if you'd like one.

Lunch Cow and Calf Inn: 1pm – non walkers welcome too

Afternoon - Beckstone: Meet Ilkley Cow and Calf cafe at 2:30 pm.

Two miles: Suitable for nearly everybody. Essentially we follow the 'geology trail' - climb up to the top of the Cow, go up the Beckstone, Beckside to see the waterfall, along Rocky Valley and down to White Wells and then the tarn to cross the beck again, see the Beckstone and return via the contour to the car-park. Dogs could be brought on this walk and let loose (if controllable) in this area (I think). Refreshments are available at White Wells or the cafe at the start/end. You might want to visit White Wells if you haven't been before.

As with any walk please come prepared for a variety of weather and walking boots are preferable - both walks cover rocky ground and in places are very muddy too in places.

Please let **Ailsa Burrows** know if you intend to come to one or other of the walks, both and, more particularly lunch, so she can make bookings/wait for you if necessary etc.

Her e-mail is ailsa_burrows@lineone.net home no (leave a message if no answer) 01422 310751 and mobile - on the day - 07752 113950.

AOUG ASSOCIATION AGM/SOCIAL WEEKEND

Friday 17th May – Sunday 19th May

There is still time to book for the 25th Anniversary celebrations at the Holiday Inn, Walsall but you will have to be quick. A booking form was included in your Winter edition of OMEGA but if you have lost it then contact the AOUG Office aoug@open.ac.uk or 01908 653316 and Cheryl Cowley will assist you. A copy is also available to download from the AOUG website www.aoug.org.uk

The weekend begins at noon on Friday when attendees register in the newly refurbished Conference Suite and take tea or coffee before having the opportunity to go on an optional excursion to the Birmingham Assay Office within the vast Birmingham Jewellery Quarter. After the Friday evening meal the local members from the West Midlands will lead an activity designed to give you the opportunity to get to know other members in a relaxed manner.

All friends and family are invited to attend this weekend and whilst members attend the AGMs, non-members can take an additional excursion to the Walsall Leather Museum. They will be welcomed with an introductory talk and then have time to explore the interactive Museum at their own speed. Within the Museum are craftsmen or women, in period dress, carrying out the historical crafts, and they will explain their work and offer visitors the chance to have a go themselves.

Saturday morning are the formal AGM meetings for members followed by a buffet lunch before another optional excursion to the Black Country Open Air Museum whilst those on the Executive Committee have their own official meeting. The Black Country Museum covers a 26 acre site, and includes historical buildings brought from all over the area and reconstructed on the site or built there based on designs of other such buildings. Transport systems, industry, social aspects, shops, houses and school – all are represented. A really fascinating place!

Then Saturday Gala Evening offers a true celebration with pre-dinner drinks before the formal evening meal. OU dignitaries have been invited, as well as the Mayor and Mayoress of Walsall and after the dinner with many little added extra for the 25th Anniversary included, we shall be entertained to a light-hearted talk by Ian Jelf, one of the official Blue Badge Guides for all the major towns in the West Midlands. He is to talk about his work and the many amusing aspects that he has encountered.

However the evening does not stop there as a Barn Dance band, “Bandjacs” is booked with a caller to lead the dancing for all of those who are still young at heart.

Sunday morning sees yet another optional excursion - a ride on a canal boat, but not just a traditional canal boat. Before stepping aboard this one you will be given a hard hat as this open-topped canal boat takes us into the Dudley Tunnel and many of the surrounding Limestone Caves. We pass through areas where in days gone by the only way to move the boat was by “legging it”, men lying on their backs, walking their legs in the air along the roof of the tunnel. Fortunately today, you will not be asked to do that, nor will we spend our time completely underground as much of the roof of the network has gone and vast caverns are open to the sky offering the chance to see a variety of plants.

Contact AOUG Office to book now!

Diary Dates

DATE	EVENT
Sat 16 th Feb	Saturday Meeting – Vestry, Wesley Methodist Chapel, Oxford Street, Harrogate. HG1 1PP "Bring a Thing" – Bring one object that has some significance to you and then all members who wish, give their individual talks of 5-10 mins each on their object. You can still attend without an object and hears other`s fascinating tales. Meet 10am for Coffee - Speakers 10.30am - ? BYO lunch followed by General Saturday Meeting at around 2pm
Sat 16 th March	Meet 11am at Carol-Anne`s home for Brunch - then afternoon visit to Golcar Museum. Contact Executive Representative for Carol-Ann`s details
Sun 24 th March	Walking Group offers two special short taster walks for all AOUG and families. Meet Cow and Calf car-park Ilkley at 9.15 for Puddlestone walk (6-7 mls) or meet Cow and Calf Café 2pm for Geology Trail walk. (2 mls) Or if you wish try both ! Gather for lunch in between at Cow and Calf Inn at 1pm – non walkers welcome
Sat 14 th April	Six Dales Way Walk – Section from Blubberhouses to Pateley Bridge Contact Ginny Feeney - Walking group co-ordinator for full details
Sat 20 th April	Tour of York Cemetery by Mr Clive Dawson who gave the October Saturday Meeting talk in York. Meet 11am at little chapel building in the centre of the cemetery, for coffee prior, to walk at 11.30am
Wed 8th May	Meet 7pm in bar at Doncaster Dome Complex Bowling Alley - 7.30pm Invite to members of East Midlands (05) Challenge against OUSA
Friday 17th – Sunday 19th May	Association AGM/Social Weekend at Holiday Inn, Walsall – Special 25th Anniversary event. Book via AOUG Office 01908 653316 aoug@open.ac.uk Book Now as approaching the final booking date !!
Sat 15 th June	Meet 10am for coffee.at the Friends Meeting House in York Talk at 10.30am”The Well Dressing customs in Derbyshire” Opportunity to have a little go at “petalling” “Bring you own lunch” before AOUG in Yorkshire AGM in the afternoon which begins at 1.30pm
Later in year. July TBA. Sat. 17 th August August TBA. Sat. 7 th September Sat 19 th October Oct. TBA Sat 9 th Nov Sat 7 th or 14 th Dec	Handshake visit to Bolsover Castle – East Midlands (05) Visit to Sewerby Hall, Bridlington Outdoor theatre at Nostell Priory 25 th Anniversary event – Celebration Canal trip from Skipton Saturday Meeting – Leeds Regional Office Mini Cruise to Amsterdam – full details on AOUG website very soon. “History of the Player Piano”- Lesley Sleigh`s home. Opportunity to have a go. Rock and Roll Panto at Leeds City Varieties
Walking Dates Sun 15 th Sept. 26 th Oct	Six Dales Way – covering another section T-Shop walk in Calder Valley – another short walk for newcomers.

Contact Details

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Chairman	Derrick Franks	74, West Park, Great North Road, Darrington, Pontefract. WF8 3HY	01977 620192 derrick@franks1356.freeserve.co.uk
Walking Group	Ginny Feeney	8 Sandy Gate Hebden Bridge, HX 7 8HZ	01422 847008 ginnyf@talktalk.net

Did you receive this Newsletter by post? If so, do you have an e-mail address we may use? Or maybe you would be prepared to donate some stamps to assist with postage costs? Please contact the Secretary, Lesley Sleigh. Thank you for your co-operation with this.

