



**ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATES in YORKSHIRE**



NEWSLETTER 72

WINTER – 2014

Chairman's Letter:

Our events calendar for 2015 opens with a visit to Lady Anne Middleton's Hotel, York YO1 6DU on Saturday 17th January when members will be gathering, in the reception/bar area, for luncheon, 12 noon for 12.30 pm sit down. Following on from the inaugural event in 2014 this will again be a purely social occasion. The hotel needs confirmation no later than 10th January, if you wish to join us please contact me in good time and I will let you have copy of the menu. This venue is very close to the town centre being within a few minutes' walk of the main shopping centre, and within easy walking distance of many of the attractions York has to offer.

We again travel to the Friends Meeting House, Friargate, York YO1 9RL for our Saturday meeting on 14th February. Meet in the foyer for tea/coffee at 10.00 am for a 10.30 start to the meeting. For our talk today we again have the services of Neil Wyatt, a fellow graduate and member of AOUG in Yorkshire. On this occasion Neil's presentation is to be on the subject of royalty with particular emphasis on Edward VIII who was one of only two English Kings never to be crowned, the other also bearing the same name, Edward V. If any member has a particular topic they would like to propose for the afternoon discussion session will you please let me know. This is a bring your own lunch event although there are many outlets in the vicinity where sandwiches/snacks are available.

On Saturday 14th March we are looking forward to some evening entertainment when we visit the Old Time Music Hall, City Varieties, Swann Street, Leeds LS1 6LW. Meet in the foyer at 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm start. Purchase your own tickets prior to the event. Box Office 0113 243 0808.

Socially we are also looking for suggestions for activities that will enable us to get more members involved. If you are not an active member what could we do that would encourage you to join our social events? We would welcome any suggestions, particularly if they are family orientated as we are always pleased to welcome family or friends to any of our social activities.

Derrick Franks

DATE	EVENT
Saturday 17 th January	Luncheon, Lady Anne Middleton's Hotel, Skeldergate, York YO1 6DU. PRIOR BOOKING ESSENTIAL. 12 noon for 12.30 pm
Saturday 14 th February	Saturday Meeting, Friends Meeting House, Friargate, York YO1 9RL 10.00 am for 10.30 am Start. Speaker Neil Wyatt – Royalty – emphasis Edward VIII. Bring your own lunch.
Saturday 14 th March	Old Time Music Hall, City Varieties, Swann Street, Leeds LS1 6LW 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm start. Purchase own tickets.

For full details of any of the activities of the Walking Group, please contact Ginny Feeney. Members and their friends and families are always welcome to join any or all of these walks. Some are long distance but others, like the T-shop walk, are ideal for those who are not so physically able.

OU Walking Group

The walking group had a good year in 2014 spending weekends in Derbyshire, North Yorkshire and Whitby as well as a week-long visit to Weardale. This is an interesting and unexplored area of the country and we were returning to the comfortable house that we rented last year in order to enjoy the scenery at a different time of year.

2015 is the twenty-first anniversary of the formation of the walking group, so we are celebrating with a trip to Spain in October, led by one of the group members. New members are always welcome and if you'd like to know our plans for next year contact Ginny Feeney ginnyf@talktalk.net and I will email you with our new programme. We have a planning meeting on January 31st when we agree dates and members offer to arrange weekends. Anyone is welcome to join us for the meeting and/or a walk in the Calderdale area.

Ginny Feeney

Contact Details

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Secretary	Lesley Sleight	6, Rockcliffe Mount, Luddenden Foot, West Yorkshire HX2 6AJ	01422 883337 lesleigh@live.co.uk
Walking Group	Ginny Feeney	8 Sandy Gate Hebden Bridge HX7 8HZ	01422 847008 ginnyf@talktalk.net

Executive Representative's Report:

Once again I am asking if there is any member who is prepared to take on the role of collating and editing the Regional Newsletter. As no one responded to my request in the previous Winter Newsletter I stepped in to fill the gap but I do not want it to become a permanent arrangement. We wish to increase the membership within the Region, and nationally, but as has been previously pointed out, we do not have the opportunity to meet new graduates as we had in the past. This may be about to change as this year AOUG were allowed to have a stall at the degree ceremony held at The Harrogate Conference Centre where we were able to interact directly with the new graduates. This facility was also granted in some of the other Regions and dependent on the overall result it may become a permanent feature, as was the case in the past. Do you know of anyone having already graduated, or due to graduate in the near future, who may be interested in joining us? Do you have any thoughts on how we can get the message across to others who may also be in ignorance of our existence?

Derrick Franks

On October 25th 2014, a small group of members met in a room at the Rose Bowl, part of Leeds Beckett University, to enjoy a 'Bring a Thing' session. Surprisingly, everyone had brought a book. Ramsey Hertzog showed us his copy of Handel's 'Messiah' and described the enjoyment that he felt at singing choral music, especially this masterwork. He went on to explain Handel's life leading up to the writing of the oratorio, its premiere in Dublin and its use as a method of raising funds for charity.

Joyce Johnson began her contribution with a copy of the New Testament which her father had given to her mother in 1934. She explained that it would be a Christening present to her grandson George at his Christening at Hope in Derbyshire on the following day. She presented a poem about 'Families' with photographs of her parents, herself and her brother on holiday, her own wedding photographs, her children, when young, and their wedding photographs and talked, with love, about the birth of her grandchildren.

Malcolm White presented a copy of 'Christmas Stories' by Charles Dickens. It had been produced and bought from Boots the Chemist. The stories included 'The Cricket on the Hearth' and 'A Christmas Carol'. Malcolm explained that this book had started him reading and had kept him reading. His reading diet used to be 60% non-fiction and 40% fiction, but it had slowly evened out and was now 50/50.

My book looks like a house and is made of wood. When my mother died in 1999, the man next door to her had created a book containing a poem about her. Some of the poem was very accurate and some represented his misunderstanding of a complicated situation, but the idea that my mentally ill mother could inspire someone to write a poem and create a book is very moving. It is difficult to describe how it makes me feel, but I tried.

It was a very interesting and thought provoking Saturday meeting.

Lesley Sleigh

Yorkshire Open University Graduates Educational Trust (YOUGET)

AOUG in Yorkshire has its own charity that gives an annual Award to a new graduate. YOUGET is a separate charity to that run by our Association, and is organised and run by Trustees made up of AOUG in Yorkshire members and this local charity has the added criteria that these graduates must also be going on to do further study with the OU. This might be at honours level, another degree in a different subject area or a diploma or even an OU Masters.

YOUGET is always pleased to receive donations towards this local charity and no amount is too small, as every single penny helps to benefit the good work YOUGET does. If you can make a small one off donation, or would like to set up an annual covenant for £5 or £10, please contact the Executive Representative, who will arrange for the relevant details to be forwarded to you.

YOUGET Trustees

Please return to the Secretary, Lesley Sleigh. 6, Rockcliffe Mount, Luddenden Foot. HX2 6AJ

I / We would like to make a one off donation to YOUGET of (Cheque enclosed)

I/We would like to set up an annual covenant for the YOUGET charity of

I would like to learn about becoming a YOUGET Trustee.....

I would like to learn more about nominating a new graduate for an Award.....

Bruges and Brussels! A tale of boats, trains and taxis.

A group of AOUG members have recently returned from our now traditional excursion over to Europe. We decided not only to move our excursion from the usual November to December to allow us the chance to see the Christmas Market, but also to add an extra night and stay in a Bruges Hotel. Bruges advertised a market of about fifty stalls but there were other Belgium markets on too and Ramsey had his heart set on visiting Brussels as it had over two hundred stalls. Once settled into our cabins we met again together for our evening meal in the all you can eat buffet before exploring all the boat had to offer in the way of entertainment, shops and bars. Then after a good night's sleep, and a hearty breakfast, we docked in Zeebrugge and boarded the bus into Bruges.

Now the 'fun' began ... we walked to the taxi rank and gave the name of our hotel. The taxi driver chatted cheerfully in broken English to us until we turned a corner and drew up outside a hotel with a very similar name to ours... but not ours! How were we to know that there were two hotels with similar names and that we had not said the name clearly enough. Our taxi driver then seemed to change personality instantly. He was far from friendly when he discovered that we would not get out as this was not our hotel. Eventually we managed to calm him down and reassured him that we would still pay for this mistake if he would just take us to the correct hotel. The first hotel was small and dark, in a quiet part of town in a little back street – ours was smart and elegant and on a main open square with statues and fountains – quite a difference.

Once registered, we set off walking for the station to get a train to Brussels, where in the absence of any station staff we purchased our tickets from a machine. The train was luxurious and we sat on an upper deck with a great view of the countryside until we reached Ghent. Here the train came to a stop and we were informed it was going no further as there was a strike that day. Unconcerned we headed for the information desk to enquire about a bus instead. No luck - the buses were on strike too, in fact it appear that as far public transport was concerned, Brussels was shut! Ramsey was however more determined now than ever and disappeared to enquire at the taxi rank. Next thing we knew, we were sharing a taxi with a young Belgian man and were on the motorway to Brussels. All went well for the first ten to fifteen minutes until the traffic came to a standstill – a major accident up ahead and we were going nowhere. However both driver and young man were friendly and spoke excellent English and so we passed the time sharing stories and putting the world to rights. Eventually the traffic started moving and two hours later we completed the half hour journey to Brussels. The taxi driver realised that even if we reached Brussels, we were going to have difficulty getting back, (Ramsey had not thought of that!) and since he had relatives in Brussels, he offered to visit them and then to take us back when we were ready. Brussels was magical and the stalls were many and varied – a wonderful Christmas atmosphere – well worth the adventure (but don't ask the price of the taxi!). The next day we explored Bruges, the Christmas Market and the interactive Museum of the artist Van Eyck. The return with our cases necessitated another taxi and who should turn up but the same driver as had taken us to the wrong hotel. His face was a picture when he saw who his customers were but fortunately even he was able to see the funny side of the situation and seemed in good humour. A European visit to remember for many reasons! I wonder what next year will bring!

Jean Hertzog

**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?**