



ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES in the NORTH WEST

EDITION 1

Spring 2012

LOCAL NEWSLETTERS RETURN

Welcome to your Region's first, of what we hope will be a regular, local newsletter. All Regions and Nations used to have local newsletters some fifteen years ago but the increased postal costs meant that most of these stopped production many years back. However now with the ability to use the internet, and the greater realisation of the need for members to feel more connected to other graduates, all Regions and Nations are intending to re-establish these newsletters three times a year. However the success of these will depend firstly on members ensuring that their e-mail addresses are up to date on the AOUG data base and secondly that local members will offer support to their Executive Representatives and send them items for inclusion, or offer to assist in the newsletter's production or circulation. These newsletters will be more informal than our magazine OMEGA and can allow for more local interests.

Ramsey Hertzog – AOUG Chairman

The Association's AGM is coming to the North West 18th – 20th May 2012

Maybe you have never attend an AOUG event, but there is no better time to get involved than now, as the AOUG AGM will this year be held here in the North West. AOUG members are coming from all over the UK to meet at the Britannia Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool and we hope that as many local members as possible will join in to give them a true northern welcome.

The weekend begins with an excursion down to Albert Dock to explore Liverpool by land and water on the Yellow Duckmarine. A chance for all to relax, especially those who have travelled a long way but even for us here in the North West, a chance to see the city from a difference angle whilst sharing good company and putting the world to rights. Then after the evening meal, our Executive Representative has organised in house entertainment for the Friday night which will give attendees another chance to get to know each other. No one attending alone, need feel isolated.

Or how about going for the Saturday to the meetings? There is so much change going on within the Open University that is affecting AOUG, you can be assured of plenty to talk about. Maybe you might consider joining the optional excursion to Speke Hall, a National Trust property. National Trust members can book for just £7.50 (non members £14.50) for transport to and fro and a guided tour of the grounds, with plenty of time to explore the hall at your leisure with guides in each room to answer any questions.

Then why not extend your day and brush off your "glad rags" to meet up with friends old and new at the Gala evening or even just come for the evening if you prefer. The evening begins with a drinks reception at 7pm and is followed by a three course meal with a guest speaker, music and dancing. Being in Liverpool the theme for the speaker and the music is The Beatles and the Association has booked, Peter Piper, (an OU tutor and AOUG Member), to be both the speaker and the musical entertainment along with his partner Christine. We can therefore be guaranteed a really good lively evening.

So please come and welcome those from other Regions and Nations, get the chance to make new friends.. There is the ideal opportunity for local members to attend without having the added expense of long journeys or overnight stays. Booking is essential so **contact AOUG Office on 01908 653316 and speak to Cheryl Cowley to book quickly.**

News from the Association`s Executive Committee

Your local Executive Representative is your link for passing information to and from the Executive Committee and this newsletter will give us the opportunity of keeping you up to date with issues that may affect the membership, so let me, give you a little flavour of the current situation.

The Open University is currently going through major reorganisations to meet the challenges of the technological and economic world and many of these changes have an affect on our AOUG`s organisation. OU Directors still are in charge in the OU centres in Scotland, Wales and Ireland but all the Directors for the Regions have now been replaced with “Assistant Director, Student Services”, a lower ranking, with coordinators for all the Regions being based on campus in Milton Keynes. The Assistant Director, Student Services for the North West is Mrs Helen Vesty and through her, the North West Executive Representative will offer volunteers for local OU events, requests the use of rooms at OU Office, or discuss any other local issues. However the organisation of the AOUG Award for a local graduate, or an AOUG Civic Reception for new OU graduates will now be covered centrally from Milton Keynes and thus will require the Executive Representatives to work via AOUG Officers for some organisational aspects.

Many OU Campus departments are being “streamlined” and most of the old school OU staff with whom AOUG has had very close mutually supportive links have now left and the OU systems now require AOUG to involve the Alumni staff in all our campus communications. This was discussed in more depth on an insert in OMEGA, to which we hope you will respond.

Margaret Stobirski – Executive Representative

AOUG Website – aoug.org.uk

AOUG website has a large selection of pages to view including Association and OU news and many archive sections for those interested in our history, but more importantly for local members it has several pages dedicated to your own Region. Each Region or Nation has a Welcome page, a Newsletter page and a Diary Dates page with recently added Memory Lane photos and the facility to add Booking forms as required.

Do you have any digital photos of North West events or any North West members, that we might display on your Memory Lane page? If so please send them to Cheryl Cowley on the AOUG Office aoug@open.ac.uk and she will upload them for you. And how about looking through any of those already there and sending in your memories about any of them.

However the Association`s website now has a new on-line membership facility so that you are able to renew your membership on-line and prevent any risk of lapsing and thus missing out on receiving your OMEGA and all the other communications being you information about your Association. If you are not sure when your renewal is due, how much to pay or what method you normally pay by, then the on-line facility allows you to contact AOUG to find out. Alternatively you can always give Cheryl Cowley a ring on 01908 653316 to check directly.

Then very shortly we are intending to make online facilities available for the purchase of our AOUG merchandise. Trading is currently only available by post or telephone but soon you will be able to purchase items direct from the website through a secure facility. We are therefore hoping that it will not only increase the sales we take but will then allow AOUG to develop its range to incorporate a much larger selection of gifts.

Jean Hertzog AOUG Publicity Officer

Long established groups in North West

OU graduates have been meeting together as a group long before the Association of Open University Graduates even began and have continued to meet since the formation of AOUG 23 years ago. Here in the North West we are really fortunate to have Olga Camm, our Association's founder, who is still able to attend local events with us and is even attending the full AGM weekend in Liverpool. It is really rewarding to know that long standing members still enjoy meeting together but what about the newer members? We know that there are many, many of you out there who for one reason or another have never felt able to attend any of the varied programme of events. Why is this? Is it that you just don't like the thought of coming alone to an event where you know nobody? If it is this holding you back then please look in the Diary Date section of OMEGA or on the website where you will find the calendar of events then please e-mail or ring, just get in touch with the local organiser then someone will be ready to greet you and you need not feel alone. We really are a friendly bunch!

Or is it that the events too far away, or at the wrong time, or not the sort of thing you are interested in? Then why not consider organising something yourself – just choose something you would like to do and contact the Executive Representative who will advertise it for you and who knows, before long you might have helped to create a new group doing the things that interest you.

25th Anniversary Year - 2013

Do you remember The Open University's 40th Anniversary in 2009, when AOUG itself also celebrated our 21st Anniversary. Celebrations were held the length and breadth of the UK and it was a great opportunity for a party. Well AOUG likes any excuse for a party and so when 2013 comes around we are going to do it all again, this time for our 25th Anniversary. Our Silver Anniversary – that calls for something even more special so we are asking you all to start thinking now about how the North West would like to celebrate. Formal meals perhaps, special lectures, a trip to the Isle of Man like we organised years ago or what else? Please share your ideas with me, or the new Executive Representative.

Executive Representative for the North West

I say with the new Executive Representative, as I am coming to the end of my three years as your Executive Representative and as yet do not know for definite who is to take over from me after the forthcoming AGM weekend. As you will have seen from your ballot papers in your Spring copy of OMEGA, no one put their name forward for election for the North West. This now means that it will be down to the Executive Committee to nominate people they feel suitable for the role and for them to vote to co-opt someone for us. Whoever is co-opted will then take on the role until the 2013 AGM and I sincerely hope that you will all give them your full support.

I have enjoyed my years as your Executive Representative (interspersed with those as the Association Publicity Officer), and have got to know so many people both locally and through the many Regions and Nations, that I am now proud to think of as friends. The work has been interesting, and sometimes challenging, but always worthwhile. I give my thanks to all of you who have supported me along the way, too many to list here, but I'm sure you know who you are! Now as I hand over the reins, I wish my successor all the very best of luck with their endeavours. They will have my full support and as for me, I shall continue to work in whatever way I can for our Association.

Margaret Stobirski

Diary Dates

DATE	EVENT
Fri. 18 th – Sun 20 th May	Association AGM at the Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Last chance to book!! Contact AOUG Office 01908 653316 quickly!!
Friday 25 th May	Meet others for food at 7pm at Hoghton Arms, Blackburn Road, Whitnell.
Sunday 27 th May	Handshake event with Nation 10 and Region 07. Meet 11am in Llangollen Wharf Tearooms, Llangollen, North Wales, to join other members for a coffee followed at 11.30am by a 2 hour return trip on the canal by horse drawn boat. Sit back and enjoy the countryside amongst good company, with a 20mins break at the Chain Bridge Hotel to enable a view of Horseshoe Falls. Please note there are no parking facilities at the Wharf. (Nearest car parks are on Parade Street and Market Street.) Booking in advance with Ramsey Hertzog 01246 514746 ramseyhertzog@hotmail.co.uk
Sunday 12 th June	Meet in the car park at 11am for a tour of Arley Hall and gardens, Northwich, CW9 6NA
Friday 27 th July	Come at 7pm to the Hoghton Arms, Blackburn Road, Whitnell for some food with other members.
Fylde Group:	Contact the local contact for details of events in that area including Preston Guild Hall concerts.

Contact Details

AOUG Office	Cheryl Cowley	Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA	01908 653316 aoug@open.ac.uk
Executive Representative	Margaret Stobirski	1, Walton Heath Road, Walton. WA4 6HZ	01925 263161 mags@stobirski.com
Local contacts	Olga Camm Tony Leighton Vall Yates	Fylde Preston Rochdale	01253 399591 01772 742853 01706 341251

The Bordering Areas

If you live near the border of the North West, you may find it easier to join activities in the neighbouring Regions of the North, Yorkshire, Wales or the West Midlands. You will always be welcome wherever you decide to go but it is advisable to contact the Executive Representative in advance, to welcome you.

North - Region 09 Executive Representative - Violet Rook- lealand5-vi@yahoo.co.uk 0796227609

Yorkshire – Region 07 Executive Representative - Lesley Sleight 01422883337 lesleigh@live.co.uk

Wales – Nation 10 Executive Representative - Bill Clark 01291641783 williamjhclark@msn.com

West Midlands – Region 04 Executive Representative - Mohammad Motawalla 01902 771328
mamotawalla@yahoo.co.uk

Did you receive this Newsletter by post? If so, do you have an e-mail address we may use? Please contact the AOUG Office, (aoug@open.ac.uk) with your details. Thank you for your cooperation Alternatively, if you prefer a postal version, please consider donating stamps to keep reduce our costs.

