



Association of Open University Graduates Nation 10 - Wales

Edition 8

Spring 2015

In February the Local Contact for Wales organised a visit to Cardiff Castle. This magnificent structure set in the heart of the city is passed regularly by shoppers, students and business people who rarely give it a second glance as they go about their daily lives. Yet behind the gatehouse is wealthy of history on their doorstep. The Roman fort at Cardiff was thought to have been established at the end of the 50s AD. Archaeological excavations indicate that this was the first of four forts and remains of the Roman wall can be seen today. After the Norman conquest, the Castle's keep was built, re-using the site of the Roman fort.



The Castle passed through the hands of many noble families until in 1766, it passed by marriage to the Bute family. The Bute family continued to stay at the Castle throughout the 1920s and 1930s, although they had sold off many of their business interests in South Wales. Following the death of the 4th Marquess of Bute, the family decided to give the Castle and much of its parkland to the city of Cardiff. The best known feature of the castle is the 'Animal Wall'. The original section was completed in 1892 but then part was moved after WWII to allow for street widening but several more animals were added at that time. Now these animals watch over the busy city.

Association News

AGM and Social weekend in Caernarfon, North Wales.

There is still time to book for the Association's annual get together which this year will be held at the Celtic Royal Hotel, right in the heart of Caernarfon, just five minutes' walk from the famous castle. Full board package from after Friday lunch until after Sunday lunch is £270 and this includes all the evening entertainment on both Friday and Saturday evening. The Gala Dinner on Saturday is a real chance to dust off your finery and enjoy a relaxing evening with a pre-dinner drink, a three course dinner, an after dinner speaker and then musical entertainment. This year we have a 'twmpath' – the Welsh equivalent of a Scottish Ceilidh. In addition there are the optional excursions starting on Friday afternoon with a train ride up Snowdon and weather permitting, a chance to take in the views from the top. Then on Saturday afternoon, there is the chance to visit the National Slate Museum, based on the site of the Dinorwic Quarry, and on Sunday morning, a unique opportunity to take a bus ride deep inside the mountains to experience the Electric Mountain Power Station. All the excursions

and other activities are open to all OU graduates, friends and family whether they are AOUG members or not. Everyone is very welcome. So come on your own or bring a group, the choice is yours but do come!

Summary of Executive Committee Meeting at Milton Keynes

At the meeting on Saturday 7th February the Executive Committee re-appointed Trevor Taylor as our OMEGA Editor for the next twelve months and it was also noted that the Spring edition of OMEGA would be produced in full colour. Lesley Sleight was also re-appointed for the coming year as Company Secretary. Unfortunately due to family commitments, Violet Rook has had to resign as Development Officer and so all her areas of responsibility are now being shared out amongst the remaining four Officers.

Cheryl Cowley our Clerical Officer has had a request for a reduction in her hours approved and so from the start of February, Office hours will be 10am until 4pm Monday to Friday. You are still able to leave messages on the answer phone when Cheryl is not available, and she will respond to you as soon as is possible on her next working day. It has been approved that AOUG advertise through Reeds Employment Agency for a Clerical Assistant to work just one day a week alongside Cheryl to learn the Office procedures.

The AOUG Foundation for Education Awards for the Regions and Nations are once again to be widely advertised. Nominations for any new graduate who has gained their OU degree within the last twelve months despite overcoming adversity over and above that of the average student need to be received at the AOUG Office by 22nd June 2015.

Information will also go out in March to all OU research departments to encourage nominations for our AOUG Foundation for Education Research Awards. The presentations for these will take place as usual on the first Friday in October on the OU campus and will be followed by our Annual Foundation Lecture which this year is going to be by Paul Catley, the Head of the Law School. Tickets, for any or all of the day, including a buffet lunch, are priced at £10 each and can be obtained from the AOUG Office (01908 653316). If you have never been to the OU campus before, then this is your perfect opportunity to explore the beautiful grounds.

The Officers have had several meetings with the OU over the Winter months and further meetings are in the process of being arranged. All of these seem to present positive support. The new OUSA President, Ruth Tudor, has also met the Officers and it has been agreed that links with AOUG will be included on the OUSA Website. Research is in progress as to AOUG making more use of various electronic communications in order to promote our Association and to provide more fluid communications between members.

The most important function of the Spring EC Meeting is to set the budget for the ensuing year. Money is always extremely tight and priorities for the year have to be agreed. Executive Representatives' budgets increased over the last two years to enable the production of the Local Newsletters but this has now been reduced back down to just £100 for most areas for the year. You may recall that in the Winter 2014 OMEGA members' attention was drawn to the ever spiralling cost of sending three Newsletters annually by post. We cannot promise postal versions unless you can help by sending in postage stamps. Please do check that AOUG Office has your current e-mail address so that you do not miss out.

Diary Dates

South Wales

Cardiff Area

Saturday 23rd May. 11am

Meet for coffee in the Lewis Arms, Mill Road, Tongwynlais, Cardiff CF15 7JP before walking to Castell Coch just five minutes away. This is a 19th Century Gothic Revival castle built on the remains of a 13th Century fortification. From the panels of hand painted flora, fauna, flocks of butterflies and flights of parakeets, to the murals of Christian martyrs, the castle shows elaboration and amazing eclectic displays. This castle is known as 'Medieval fantasy'. Admission £5.50 (Concessions £4.10)

Saturday 4th July. 11am

Meet in the Café Rouge, 2, Mermaid Quay, Cardiff CF10 5BZ prior to walking to Stuart Place, off Stuart Street, Cardiff CF10 5BW to ride the 12noon Cardiff Road Train for a fifty minute tour with live commentary through an area of history, passing the Wales Millennium Centre, the National Assembly, Scott Harbour, the Norwegian Church and Helwick Lightship. The train then enters the normally restricted areas of the Port of Cardiff, then over the Cardiff Barrage round Cardiff Bay. Price £4 adults, (£3 concessions). Then share lunch together in one of the many restaurants along the front of Cardiff Bay. There is also the additional opportunity after lunch to explore The Lightship 2000 and to climb the light-tower, and receive a certificate to prove it, to see the reflectors that send light over a twenty five mile radius. If the weather is kind we could take afternoon tea on the helicopter deck and enjoy the amazing views of the bay.

English Border

Saturday 6th June. 1pm

Meet at the Information Desk (situated at the North Porch Door) Hereford Cathedral, Cathedral Close, Hereford. HR1 2NG for a handshake event and an opportunity to share a light lunch with Region 04 members in a room reserved for our exclusive use prior to a visit to the Mappa Mundi & Chained Library Exhibition Centre and Hereford Cathedral. For those just wishing to visit the exhibition centre, meet at 2pm at the Information Desk. The exhibition will include a copy of the Magna Carta (a copy made in 1217) in this 800th year since its original signing by King John in 1215. Reconvene in the Cloister Café from 3pm. Full day event prices £12 (£11 concessions), Exhibition only £5 (concessions £4) or lunch only £7. Anyone not participating in either lunch or the exhibition centre, can visit the Cathedral free of charge for the duration. For more information, please contact the Executive Representative. To participate, please send a cheque made payable to "AOUG in the West Midlands" as soon as possible and definitely before 11th May to the 04 Region Executive Representative to reserve a place.

Local Newsletters

My e-mail address is

Home phone: Mobile:

I enclose a donation of stamps to receive my Newsletter by post

Name: PI Number:

Please type or print your name clearly Please return to the AOUG Office aoug@open.ac.uk or AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes. MK7 6AA

North Wales

Saturday 21st March 11am

Meet in the Galleria coffee shop, 7 Market Street, Rhyl, Clwyd, LL18 1RL where members, and their friends and family in the North Wales area can join in an informal chat and exchange ideas for future activities in their area, whilst enjoying light refreshments.

Tuesday 28th April 11am

Meet at in the tearoom of Bodnant Gardens, Tal-y-Cafn, near Colwyn Bay, Conwy, LL28 5RE to join members and friends for a stroll around to view the beautiful Rhododendrons combined with a visit to the 'Poem'. The 'Poem' is a mausoleum which was built by Henry Davis Pochin as a last resting place for him and his family. It is situated in the centre of the garden perched high above the river Hiraethlyn. It has beautiful interior features including ornate stained glass windows. Bodnant Gardens are situated above the River Conwy and looks across the valley towards the Snowdonia range of North Wales. There is a small shopping area with a Woollen Mill and National Trust shop, so don't forget your National Trust Membership Card.

Friday 8th - Sunday 10th May

The Association AGM and Social Weekend is to be held at the Celtic Royal Hotel, Bangor St, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 1AY. Welsh members will be playing hosts to members, friends and family from all the other Regions and Nations in the UK and those visiting from Europe or the Rest of the World. You can attend either as a resident or day visitor for the whole weekend or there are options for smaller periods for the special activities. However as AOUG has made a block booking, members' bookings are essential in advance via the AOUG Office and the necessary booking form was included as an insert in the Winter OMEGA but is still available from the AOUG Office.

Executive Representative Vacant

LOCAL CONTACTS

Cardiff - Philip Thomas 02920 751309 Philip.thomas8@sky.com

Castell Coch - AOUG Treasurer – Jean Hertzog 01246 424746

Rhyl event - Margaret Stobirski 01925 263161 margaretstobirski@gmail.com

Borders event – Philip Evans 01905 428667 AOUG.Philip@gmail.com

AGM Weekend and all other enquiries - AOUG Office 01908 653316 aoug@open.ac.uk

I am interesting in attending a group in Rhyl / Caernarfon / Cardiff / Mid Wales

I would like to attend events around thearea.

I am able to organise a single event in thearea

I should like to know more about being a Local Contact for

I am interested in learning about the role of Executive Representative

Please complete the response slip and return to AOUG Office, Walton Hall Milton Keynes MK7 6AA or aoug@open.ac.uk 01908 653316