



## ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES in SCOTLAND

**Edition 3 Spring      NATION 11 NEWSLETTER      April 2013**

Hello to all AOUG members in Scotland. This year is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the AOUG and the regions and nations are hoping to celebrate the event in their own way. One region is holding a garden party, another is having a canal trip. The AOUG is hoping to hold a gala dinner at Bletchley Park, famous for code breaking during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. The original big house is now a conference and entertainment centre. In Wales it is hoped AOUG members will get together at a medieval banquet at Cardiff Castle. There are lots of events scheduled for the Edinburgh Group during the summer with some smaller events in the Borders area. Perhaps this year we could all celebrate the AOUG and have an extended party to cheer us all up since the weather is still maintaining its icy grip with snow and ice. Please read the diary dates and try to attend if you can, and inform Lewis McKay or myself by telephone or email. You, your family and friends will be very welcome.

### **The Open University in Scotland**

THE EDINBURGH GROUP AGM - A summary by Lewis McKay.

The Edinburgh AGM was, for the first time, held on Saturday morning with lunch to follow. The venue as usual was the Quaker Meeting House in Victoria Terrace. The speaker was Andrew McMillan, former President of the British Geological Survey, whose talk entitled 'The Building Stones of Scotland' examined the link between the natural and built environments.

The speaker's talk covered the types of building stone found over different parts of Scotland, for example granite in Aberdeen and sandstone in Edinburgh. He explained that unfortunately pretty well all of Scotland's main quarries are now exhausted and that for renovation of old buildings, matching stone has to be found further afield. Quite a lot now comes from the North of England but also from abroad, even using imported sandstone from India. We all left more conscious of Edinburgh's building materials and we found that we were examining walls and pavements and spotting the white crystals in dark grey paving stones which had previously gone unnoticed. We also remarked that the stonework used in some fairly new buildings was not weathering at all well.

A well attended talk and an interesting insight into the origins and the building materials used in the creation of the architecture that surround us in Edinburgh today.

## **AOUG EVENTS 2013**

### **The AGM at Walsall on 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2013 at the Holiday Inn.**

It is being organized by Mohammed Motawalla, Executive Representative for Region 04 West Midlands. One of the excursions is a visit to the Birmingham Assay Office and Birmingham Jewellery Quarter. All the details of this event are in the latest edition of Omega.

**Please note: You could be co-opted as Executive Representative for Scotland at the AGM**

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013 2pm– AOUG Faculty Awards and AOUG Foundation Lecture:**

### **Handel in London – A Documentary Journey**

By Professor Donald Burrows Director of the Handel Project at the Open University.  
To be held at Walton Hall. Tickets £10 contact [AOUG@open.ac.uk](mailto:AOUG@open.ac.uk) 01908 653316

### **The AOUG Silver Anniversary – 2013**

Yes, AOUG will be 25 years old in 2013, so how would the members in Scotland like to celebrate this event?.....

**See OMEGA for some items such as a Silver Nickel Badge on sale to celebrate the 25 years of AOUG.**

### **AOUG Diary Dates – May to September 2013**

#### **Edinburgh Area**

#### **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 12 noon Vikings Exhibition at the Museum of Scotland,**

The National Museum of Scotland is the only UK venue to show this outstanding exhibition of more than 500 objects from the world-renowned collections of the Swedish History Museum in Stockholm. Rarely seen outside Scandinavia, these artefacts show the Vikings in a new and intriguing light. With refreshments at the National Library Café.

#### **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2.30pm Calum's Road at the Traverse Theatre**

*Calum's Road* has become the stuff of modern folklore. It is the remarkable true story of one man's single-minded determination to challenge the powers-that-be. Based on Roger Hutchinson's elegiac book of the same name, Scots playwright David Harrower offers audiences the richly detailed and unhurried description of a dying way of life in Northern Raasay.

#### **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 12 noon. Visit to Rosslyn Chapel and the New Visitor Centre.**

Rosslyn Chapel is a Category A listed building and Scheduled Ancient Monument, located in the village of Roslin, approximately 7 miles south of Edinburgh. Built between 1446 and 1484, it has been described as an "Architectural Wonder" and a "Library in Stone".

**August THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL - Fringe Friday: Events to be selected later and advised via email or SAEs.**

**Friday 27th September 'Edinburgh's Landscape' Talk by Dr Angus Miller at the QMH**

Dr Angus Miller of the Edinburgh Geological Society and the Scottish Geodiversity Forum is a well known geological tour guide based in Edinburgh . Through his business Geowalks he has taken thousands of people for walks exploring the rocks and landscapes of Edinburgh and further afield. This talk will take a look at the events going back hundreds of millions of years that have formed Edinburgh's varied bedrock, and the ways that this has been shaped by rain, rivers and ice to create the stunning cityscape of today, with its strong influences on the development of Edinburgh. Local Contact Lewis Mckay will advise of the times for this event upon request.

**The Border Area**

**Friday 3rd May at 2.30pm Jedburgh** The First and Last Café car park near the Abbey. Jedburgh is famous for its connections with so many of the greatest citizens of Scotland. A lovely town with a fine High Street.

**Friday 5th July, at 2.30pm Jedburgh** Meet at the car park of Edinburgh Mills at the northern end of the main by-pass road. Talk and tea

**Saturday 3rd August 3pm Kelso.** Meet outside the main entrance to Floors Castle, the home of the Duke and Duchess of Roxburghshire.

**A Safari round Balmoral**

Balmoral Castle is situated in the valley of the River Dee in Scotland. Since Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert made it their summer home in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it has been known as Royal Deeside. The couple, upon seeing the area fell in love with its wild beauty, and had to build a home here for their family.

I have visited the area often and until recently one could only see the castle from the other side of the river when one passed the famous Crathie Church, which the present royal family attend when resident in the area. One could be guided around the castle ballroom and there was a shop for gifts. Then a few years ago, I noticed in a local newsletter, that one could book "A Balmoral Safari".

We went to the castle, parked the car near the shop and asked about this adventure. We were guided to the estate office and before we knew it had booked a guided tour of the Balmoral Estate for the next day. I was still a little sceptical, but keen to have a go so the next day after lunch we parked the car in the same place and went to the office. We were introduced to a very pleasant young man who took us to a new Land Rover nearby. The seats were thick smooth leather and so comfortable.

This, he said, was to be a Safari of the estate, up to the highest point where one could look down on the valley of the Dee below and see the river famous for its salmon rushing onward and from where the houses of Braemar looked tiny in the distance. It was a mild winter's day with just a touch of frost in the air, and the fir trees had a slight dust of frost on their branches. We saw Highland Cattle with their orange coats, which came across to look at the visitors as we passed and sheep running up the hillsides.

Our guide described how this was the trail Queen Victoria made to her little cottage in the Glen. And then suddenly, there it was, such a pretty thing. So tiny compared to Balmoral and closely surrounded by tall Douglas Fir trees reaching for the sky.

The sun was starting to set after two hours and we thanked our guide for a magical adventure where history and nature joined to provide a fascinating afternoon.

### **Development of the Newsletter and Local Contacts for Scotland**

It is intended that these local Newsletters will be sent out by e-mail as the postal charges would make such regular contact impossible. However many of you have not as yet submitted your e-mail address to the AOUG Office. Thus we cannot contact you this way. We therefore would like to ask you once again that if you do have an e-mail address that you contact AOUG Office and ensure that we have the correct version on the Database.

However if you do not have an e-mail or would prefer to receive this Newsletter by post, we ask you to make a donation of second class stamps to the AOUG Office, which will then be forwarded onto your new Executive Representative, just as soon as they are co-opted.

Content of these Newsletters in the future will also rely a lot on your contributions so please send something into the AOUG Office. These Local Newsletters are not restricted to OU or AOUG related items and so if it interests you, it is sure to interest other members.

### **LOCAL CONTACTS AND LOCAL NEWSLETTERS**

**My e-mail address is .....**

**I do not have an e-mail address and therefore am donating some stamps .....**

**I would like to see Newsletters items about .....**

**I would be willing to write Newsletter articles about .....**

**I enclose an item for consideration for the next Local Newsletter .....**

### **LOCAL CONTACTS**

**I am interested in attending other events around the ..... area.**

**I am interested in ..... types of activities.**

**I am willing to organize a single event .....**

**I am interested in becoming a Local Contact for ..... area.**

**I am interested in learning more about the role of Executive Representative .....**

**Name: ..... PI Number: .....**

**Please return to the AOUG Office [aoug@open.ac.uk](mailto:aoug@open.ac.uk) or AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes . MK7 6AA**

