



ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES in SCOTLAND

EDITION 1

Spring 2012

LOCAL NEWSLETTERS RETURN

Welcome to your Nation'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.

Currently Scotland does not have a local Executive Representative and since no one had been put forward for the forthcoming elections, it will be necessary for the Association's Development Officer to find a suitable candidate who can be co-opted for the coming year, to this position. The role of Executive Representative involves attending two Executive Committee meetings a year in Milton Keynes and a further meeting during the AGM weekend at the relevant venue. All travel and accommodation for these meetings is paid for by the Association. In between meetings the main duties of the Executive Representative is that of communications and of the co-ordination of the activities within Scotland and once again funding is available for these activities. The most important qualities needed are enthusiasm and a desire to develop the Association and to get to know other Scottish members. If you would be interested in considering this role, and would like more information, then please get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Ramsey Hertzog

Association AGM in Liverpool

There is still time to book for the Annual General Meeting and Social Weekend to be held this year at the Britannia Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool. Even if you can not manage the whole weekend, you may choose to attend for just part of it.

How about going for the Saturday to the meetings? There is so much change going on within the Open University that is affecting AOUG, that 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. 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.

Contact AOUG Office on 01908 653316 or aoug@open.ac.uk 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 them the opportunity of keeping you up to date with issues that may affect the membership. However in the absence of a current Executive Representative, let me, as your Association Chairman 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 Director for Scotland is Dr James Miller and it is him that the Executive Representative will approach to offer volunteers for local OU events, for requests the use of rooms at OU Office, or to 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 is discussed in more depth on another insert in OMEGA, to which I hope you will respond.

Ramsey Hertzog AOUG Chairman

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 Nation. 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 Scottish events 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 from April you will be able to purchase items direct from the website through a secure facility. We are therefore hoping that is 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 active group in Edinburgh

OU graduates have been meeting together as a group long before the Association of Open University Graduates even began and has continued to develop since the formation of AOUG 23 years ago. It is really rewarding to know that this group is still well supported and my wife Jean and I enjoying the pleasure of their company went we joined them recently for their annual New Year meal. This was held in the elegant surroundings of the Royal Overseas League, with a view of the illuminated Edinburgh Castle visible from the window. However, just because the Edinburgh group is long established, it does not mean that others would not be able to join them. If the welcome we received is anything to go by, then any AOUG member, plus their friends or family, would be very well received and would soon be developing friendships. In the Diary Date section you will find the calendar of events that the group have organised so if you live within a suitable area then please get in touch with Lewis McKay, the Local Contact and then someone will be ready to greet you.

Ramsey Hertzog

Developing Scotland

Scotland is of course a very large area, and members outside Edinburgh must not be forgotten. Until recently there was also an active group in Glasgow and a few years ago another in Aberdeen but unfortunately the local members who coordinated activities in these areas are no longer able to do so and so we are looking for AOUG members within those areas to organise any activity that interests them and to let me know so that I can advertise it for you, in the hope of reviving a local group.

However let us not forget the rest of Scotland. Anyone living in any other area such as Dumfries, Ayr, Dundee, Inverness or any of the Border regions or the Highlands and Islands, who could suggest a suitable activity or meeting place locally, please let me know so that I can put members in touch with each other.

The activity could be anything from a coffee or lunch venue which might then develop into a regular meeting point once a month maybe, or a visit to a place of interest. Some areas choose to meet in each other houses for discussion groups over tea and cakes whilst other may prefer theatre visits. If groups get re-established then the possibility of hiring venues and speakers may be of interest. Simple activities to get started without any advanced financial outlay work best, starting small with just a handful of members but who knows what this might grow into.

Ramsey Hertzog

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 Scotland would like to celebrate. Formal meals perhaps, special lectures or what about a ceilidh?

The two AGMs previously held in Scotland each presented great entertainments and I personally remember the Burns weekends that you used to organise. The ceilidh there was exhausting but great fun and so I know first hand how Scottish members enjoy a celebration. Get your thinking caps on and see if you can suggest a suitable event and venue/s for as many as possible to get involved.

Jean Hertzog

Diary Dates

DATE	EVENT
Sun 13 th May	Meet at 2pm inside the North Garden Gate in Moray Place, the top of Doune Terrace for a visit to Moray Place and Bank Gardens, Edinburgh EH3. The private 3 ½ acre Moray Place gardens are open for charity under Scotland's Garden Scheme and provides an atmosphere of tranquillity and the 6 acres of secluded wild Bank Gardens, sloping down to the Water of Leith offers vistas across the Forth. The admission price of £3.00 gains entry to both gardens. Homemade refreshments are available to purchase. Good walking shoes or boots are recommended.
Fri. 18 th – Sun 20 th May	Association AGM at the Britannia Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool. Last chance to book – end of March. Contact AOUG Office 01908 653316 quickly!!
June	Visit to Heriot Watt University Art Degree Show at Doo'cot Studios, Infirmary Street, Edinburgh.
Sat 1 st July	Meet at 2pm by the gate on Duddingston Road West to visit SWT Bawsinch and Duddingston Reserve, Edinburgh, well-established wildlife haven on one of the Scottish Wildlife Trust's monthly open days. Bought in 1971 it has been developed into an important site, with the only natural freshwater loch in the City of Edinburgh. In addition to reed beds and ponds there is Inchwood, a collection of shrubs and trees native to Scotland. Please Note: there is no Car Park and parking on the road is difficult. There are paths throughout the reserve but they are natural and rough in places and could be muddy, so wear suitable footwear. Entry is free but any donations will be welcome.
August	Fringe Friday – events to be selected later and advised via email or SAEs
Frid 14th September	At 7pm in the Quaker Meeting House, Victoria Terrace when Neil Grubb will present his fascinating film 'Oasis' featuring the birds of the North Esk river valley, up close and personal. Don't miss this fascinating footage of the wildlife on our own doorsteps. £5.00.

The Borders and the North Region

If you live near the borders, you may find it easier to join activities in the neighbouring Region of the North. However it is advisable to contact the Executive Representative in advance, to welcome you. Below is a brief selection of their activities:

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

Monday 16th April. 1pm. - Meet in the Cafe entrance of Otterburn Mill.

Thursday 26th April. 5.15pm. - Meet in foyer café of Northern Stage. 5.15pm. A talk by actor Sam West at the Northern Stage (free) Prior to a production of "Close the Coalhouse Door".

Tuesday 1st May. 1pm. - Tour and Tea. - Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle.

Tuesday 8th May 5.30pm. - Herchel Building - Newcastle University -Lord Chris Patton lecture (free).

Monday 28th May. 1.30pm. - Civic Centre Café. Newcastle Meet in the foyer. Talk and Tea

Contact Details

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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.

