



Association of Open University Graduates Nation 11 - Scotland

EDITION 8

WINTER 2014

Winter nights are now getting colder but there are the festive lights in many towns which while encouraging shoppers, add a Winter glow and memories of Summer sunshine. Over the Summer the Edinburgh Group events have continued and Lewis McKay reports that in September they enjoyed the 'Doors Open Day' that is held annually. This is when many buildings which are normally off-limits to the public open their doors and allow their staff to explain the history and function of many fascinating establishments. They met at Cafe Nero in Blackwells Bookshop on South Bridge where all the venues were within easy walking distance. The first port of call was the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church in Nicolson Square, where, following a tour of the church, they had a brief talk which included details of John Wesley's visit to Musselburgh in April 1751. Apparently on taking a quick look at Edinburgh, he had remarked, '*one of the dirtiest cities I have ever seen*'. The group then moved to the Reid Concert Hall Museum of musical instruments to see one thousand musical instruments and related items on display including stringed and woodwind instruments, bagpipes, brass, percussion and ethnic instruments. Then on to inside the Edinburgh University men's Union building – many debating rooms and plenty of bars! Then to the Buccleuch and Greyfriars Free Church of Scotland and the Chapel of Ease Graveyard - where lie the graves of some of Edinburgh's luminaries. One such is that of Dr Andrew Duncan, who was so moved by the death in Bedlam of the poet Robert Fergusson that he resolved to fund a hospital in Edinburgh where the mentally ill could be humanely looked after - the Andrew Duncan clinic. They all felt it was a fascinating day exploring just a few of Edinburgh's fine institutions.

In October the group visited the Bank of Scotland Museum on the Mound in Edinburgh. The Bank was founded in 1695 and a ledger placed in a nearby pub invited would-be investors. The building itself is an imposing structure with a dominant position overlooking Waverley station and Princes Street. Opened in 2006, this fascinating museum takes a fresh look at money – and much more. Art and design, technology, crime, trade and security – all feature in the story of money. They were able to see what one million pounds really looks like and have a go at cracking a safe. They found out what housing conditions were like in the Industrial Revolution and how working people clubbed together to build themselves better homes with the eventual creation of building societies. The Edinburgh group reported it as an engrossing afternoon but that unfortunately there were no free samples to take home.

Luis Albornoz-Parra from the British Geological Survey gave us a talk in November on the building stones of Scotland, their sourcing and conservation, and the advantages of using Scottish stone rather than importing from overseas. As a lover of stone buildings with interesting history and with a dislike of Spain's fondness for concrete and brick, Luis decided to leave Spain for Scotland, a nation built in stone. He was able to explain during his illustrated talk the many types of stone used in construction – especially of the buildings in Edinburgh where over sixty different types are used, their origins and their unique properties. He also explained that unfortunately cost-saving measures can lead to corners being cut and inferior or unsuitable materials used in the construction

of new and the repair of old buildings. Luis was an informed and confident speaker well able to convey his views and ideas on his subject. Someone who, though not Scottish, has a passion for the buildings and the construction materials used in his adopted land.

In other areas of the Nation, we held events in Dundee, Aberdeen and several of the Border areas which we hope to continue. Recently AOUG had an outing to Jedburgh which although a small town, is very central to the Borders and full of historic connections. Across the valley of Jed Water are lovely woodlands on either side of the road stretching as far as the eye can see. The countryside is rough but now well farmed, but the signs of the past still remain. On the main street of Jedburgh is the Queen's House and Sir Walter Scott once walked these streets to the Court House. His home is now a museum, where he wrote the famous novels known the world over, such as Ivanhoe, Waverley and Heart of Midlothian.



Jedburgh Abbey.

Not far from the town of Jedburgh, is Bowhill, the home of the Duke of Buccleuch. Walking around the gardens we met a very polite lady, who described its history and the details of the house. We spent about half an hour listening to her lovely descriptions and later discovered that she was the Dowager Duchess of Buccleuch. There, we also attended an event in the theatre in the grounds of Bowhill, small but with a marvellous atmosphere. Another visit to Jedburgh Abbey is planned for later this month, so do try and join us.

Association News

AOUG Research Awards and Foundation Lecture

The AOUG Research Award Ceremony was held on 3rd October at Milton Keynes when our charity the AOUG Foundation for Education presented four of the nine Research Awards. The recipients were research students who had been nominated by their Faculties and who were accompanied by their families and friends to see them receive their Awards. Research covered the varied topics of 'Crete and the Cretans of Euripedes', 'LOW Frequency ARay (LOFAR) studies of the Galactic Plane', Attitudes towards teaching in the national language in Zimbabwe, and Structural analysis of Java Identifier names. Displays of their research

work had been prepared by our Publicity Officer and their supervisors gave glowing reports on why these students had been nominated. Members from AOUG and dignitaries from the OU all enjoyed the Ceremony, which concluded with lunch and the opportunity to socialise. We were especially lucky to have the fine October weather which allowed attendees the chance to enjoy their lunch on the patio.



Following the Research Award Ceremony, AOUG members and their guests, including some Award winners and their supervisors, stayed to hear the Foundation Lecture entitled 'Personalisation in Early Years – Processes and Outcomes', which was given by Natalia Kucirkova, the winner of our 2013 Olga Camm Bursary. She described the research that had led to her Doctorate. The research had been inspired by the relationship that she had had with her grandfather when she was a child and looked at how the interactive creative process of producing their own books using photos, pictures and their own words could positively affect children's motivation to engage with the stories and to gain pleasure from communicating and reading together with adults.

Summary of Executive Committee Meeting at Milton Keynes

At the meeting on Saturday 4th October, the Executive Committee co-opted a new Executive Representative for the East Midlands, Ramsey Hertzog, who although having affiliated to Yorkshire for many years, actually lives in Derbyshire. The responsibilities of the different Executive Committee roles were again discussed and ways of mentoring and creating smoother handovers are being tried. Many of the Executive Committee positions will be up for election for Office after May 2015 so please consider getting involved and complete the nomination form in plenty of time to ensure your application is accepted.

Nominations for six different Awards for the Regions and Nations were approved, these being for 01, 02, 03, 05, 13 and Europe so whilst Executive Representatives in the respective areas are busy organising their presentation, the AOUG Publicity Officer is currently arranging the one for Region 13. It is hoped that reports of all these celebrations will feature in the Spring OMEGA.

Degree Ceremonies were discussed, and especially the success of having an AOUG stand at four of this year's venues which resulted in the raising of awareness in AOUG and the recruitment of some new members. A new system for selection of AOUG processors is being introduced for 2015. Gowns can be provided and if you haven't processed before, it's a very special experience. The Committee are also looking for volunteers to learn how to be part of our Meet and Greet team from our own stands, so why not consider that too? So if you would like to be part of the formal academic procession party representing the AOUG, or to work on our stand, please look for the application form in the 2014 Winter OMEGA.

Executive Representative -Vacant

Development Officer - Violet Rook [07962276091 viola.rook@btinternet.com](mailto:07962276091_viola.rook@btinternet.com)

LOCAL CONTACTS

Edinburgh Group-Lewis McKay 0131 4453598 lewis.mckay1@btopenworld.com

Dundee Group – Vacant

Aberdeen Group – Vacant

Highlands, Borders – Vacant

I would like to be involved in a Dundee/ Aberdeen / Borders group

I would be interested in a group in I am interested inactivities.

I am interested in organising a single event/ becoming a Local Contact for

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

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday 15th December. 7.15pm

Meet inside for a Christmas Concert by St Mary's Music School for a festive evening of instrumental and vocal music, performed by the musicians of Scotland's specialist music school. Starts 7.30pm with an estimated finish of 9.30pm). Tickets for unreserved seating is £8, concessions £5, available from the School Office 0131 538 7766 and at the door on the night.

Wednesday 30th December 2.30pm

Meet at the Jedburgh Abbey Information Board in the car park in front of Jedburgh Abbey, Abbey Bridge End, Jedburgh TD8 6JQ for a Christmas Holiday visit to Jedburgh to have a tea and talk and New Year discussion at the 'First and Last Café', which is situated on the A68 road at Jedburgh Abbey just within the town boundary. There is a large car park.

Saturday 23rd January 2pm

Meet in the car park of Otterburn Mill, Otterburn, Northumberland NE19 1JT which is about five miles from the Scottish Board in England. We shall have a look around the Mill Shop which once made cot blankets for Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret and where one can see where the saying "On Tender Hooks" originated via the working of the woollen mill.

Saturday 24th January. 12.30pm

The venue for our Annual Lunch will once again be in the Robert Louis Stevenson room of the Royal Overseas League, Over-Seas House, 100, Princes Street, Edinburgh EH2 3AB. The price for two courses to include coffee is £19 (aperitif and tip included) a significant reduction on the normal cost. Lunch will be served at 1pm

Thursday 19th February. 2pm

Meet in the foyer of the Festival Theatre, 13-29 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9FT to see the play "One Man, Two Guvnors" This, the UK National Theatre's award-winning comedy is 'a glorious celebration of British comedy' with 'a unique laugh-out-loud mix of satire, songs, slapstick'. Please purchase your own tickets for the matinee at 2.30pm from the Box Office, seat prices range from £14.50 to £32.50 (concessions £3 off); fees apply to on-line and telephone bookings.

Saturday 14th March. 11am.

Meet for the Edinburgh group AGM at the Quaker Meeting House, 7, Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh. EH1 2JL. The speaker will be announced nearer the time. Members can have lunch at a nearby venue after the meeting. Admission fee £5.00.

Local Newsletters

I would be willing to write Newsletter articles about

My e-mail address is

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