



## Association of Open University Graduates Nation 12 – Ireland

EDITION 8

SPRING 2015

### Local News

Munster Area Group met at King John's Castle, Limerick and visitors from the Dublin Area were made very welcome. We decided to visit the Treaty Stone first as although the morning was bright and cheerful rain was promised. The Stone is said to be the base on which the Treaty of Limerick (1691) was signed following the war between William III of Hanover and his Father-in-Law James II. Limerick was the last town in Ireland to resist William of Orange in his dispute with James who was favoured by Ireland due to his commitment to Catholicism. One of the promises of the Treaty was religious freedom to the Roman Catholics of Ireland which was subsequently broken so Limerick became known as the City of the 'Broken Treaty'.

The tour of King John's Castle took longer than planned as there was so much to see. The history of the Castle stretches from Viking settlements through Norman times and on-going scenes of historical interest. The Castle in its present form is over eight hundred years old. Building began in 1200 by order of King John when he visited the City. The Normans had already established themselves across the City. Limerick became a Royal City under the direct rule of King John. Change and conflict came during the Reformation which took its toll on the Castle leading to three rebellions and nine years of war. However the Castle stood proud in the heart of the City, part of the time serving as military barracks. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century it was reclaimed as a National Monument which is now supported by Shannon Heritage.

Our next stop was the Hunt Museum. The Museum is based in what was the Custom House, which is a Palladian style building designed by Italian Architect, Davis Duckart. The Museum houses some two thousand original works of art and antiquity collected by John and Gertrude Hunt. It stretches from the Stone Age to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and comprises an archaeological collection, art development from the Medieval Period, through the Renaissance, to the age of Enlightenment. A gallery is also designated for changing exhibitions from international institutions and private collections. The archaeological collection includes material from the ancient civilisations of Egypt, Greece and Rome, together with European and Irish pieces.

We then visited the Frank McCourt Museum dedicated to Frank's life story. Frank McCourt won several awards for his book 'Angela's Ashes', including the Pulitzer Prize (1997), Boeke Prize (1997) and the National Book Critics Circle Award (1996). We were unable to have a tour of the museum as on Saturdays tours are by appointment only.

We all agreed that another meeting in Limerick would be interesting as there were sights which we were not able to fit in and more time could be spent on its Medieval History, for example, St Mary's Cathedral which was founded in 1168. Limerick is also famous for its Georgian architecture, examples of which can be seen on a walking tour of the Georgian Quarter. These tours explain the architecture, history and folklore of the City. They can be pre-booked and arranged to suit particular interests.

**Munster Local Contact** –Mary Niblett.

Members of the Dublin Group met on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2015 for 'The Marino Walk' They started with a light lunch at the Cat and Cage pub in Drumcondra ready to commence their walk at 2pm. Local Contact Sean O'Broin led the walk from Drumcondra churchyard, which is described as an oasis in the heart of the city, and where such luminaries as James Gandon, architect of the Custom House, Four Courts, Kings Inns and Emo Court, Patrick Heeney, composer of the melody for the National Anthem 'A Soldiers Song' and members of the Jameson whiskey distilling family are interred. The walk then took in All Hallows College followed by Clonturk Park, where the GAA All Ireland Finals (1890 to 1892) were played before relocation to Jones Road (Croke Park). Next was the Jewish Cemetery in Fairview constructed in year 5618, the Crescent, Clontarf, dating from 1792 which was built to spoil the sea view of the Earl of Charlemont's residence. Of particular interest was No. 15, the former residence of Bram Stoker, author of the Horror Story, Dracula. The members then strolled through the Marino, the first public housing scheme built by the State in 1926 after independence, with its circular symmetrical style of construction with large gardens modelled on the Garden City Movement, before concluding in the Casino designed by Sir William Chambers for the First Earl of Charlemont (1775). Sean is currently a student of Local History at Maynooth University and some anecdotes from the original Marino Walk by the Irish historian Eamonn Mac Thomais in the 1970s were provided during the course of the walk.

**Dublin Local Contact** – Sean O'Broin

## **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 go 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!

# Diary Dates

## Munster Area

### Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April. 11.30am

Meet for coffee at Dooley's Hotel restaurant, 30 Merchant's Quay, Waterford, (a copy of OMEGA will be on the table) followed by a visit to Waterford Crystal. Hourly visits are available at a cost of 10 euros. Time permitting we could visit Bishop's Palace, across the road – cost 4 euros. Dooley's Hotel is accessible across the bridge from the train and bus stations. Car parking is available and we could have lunch at either venue.

## Dublin Area

### Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June. 1pm

Meet at Kavanagh's Marino House, 16, Malahide Road, Marino, Dublin 3, for lunch prior to visiting Casino, Cherrymount, Crescent, off Malahide Road, at 2pm for a guided tour to admire this famous piece of 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Irish neo-classical architecture, designed as a pleasure house for James Caulfield (1st Earl of Charlemont). The Casino, which means 'small house' contains a total of sixteen finely decorated rooms. After visiting the Casino, there is the added option to stroll through the Marino Housing Estate, the first major housing development after independence in 1922 and which was built on the garden city style of landscaping and architecture. Of particular interest is Number 15 the Crescent and you can learn all about its chequered history. Admission to the Casino is Adults 3 Euros (Concessions 2 Euros). Please note that occasionally the Casino is closed for Civil Ceremonies so please contact the Dublin Local Contact in advance to find out the up to date details.

## Belfast Area

### Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June. 10.30am

Meet in the Coach House tea-room at Castle Ward, Strangford, Downpatrick, County Down, BT30 7LS, high on the hillside with great views across Strangford Lough. A visit could then be made to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Castle Ward, former home of the Viscount Bangor, now owned by the National Trust. There is also the Farmyard Craft Village and gardens to explore. Entry fees apply to non-NT members.

## Executive Representative –Vacant

### Local Contacts

**Munster Area-** Mary Niblett 052 6185480 [maryniblett@btinternet.com](mailto:maryniblett@btinternet.com)

**Dublin Area** – Sean O'Broin – 0894294935 [ssob3012@gmail.com](mailto:ssob3012@gmail.com)

**Belfast Area** – John Ringland – 02891 468294

-----  
I /we will be attending the Munster event .....

I /we will be attending the Dublin event .....

I/we will be attending the Belfast event .....

I would like to suggest a visit to .....

I would like to attend a group in the ..... area

I am interested in learning more about the role of a Local Contact .....

## Summary of Executive Committee Meeting at Milton Keynes

At the meeting on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> 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 Sleigh 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 22<sup>nd</sup> 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 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.

---

Name: ..... PI number .....

Tel: .....E-mail address: .....

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

I enclose an article for a future Local Newsletter .....

I would like to suggest the formation of a group in .....area.