



ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES in IRELAND

EDITION 1

July 2012

LOCAL NEWSLETTERS RETURN

Welcome to your first, of what we hope will be a regular, e-mail 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 have agreed to re-establish these newsletters three times a year.

Developing AOUG in Ireland

First of all, let me take this opportunity of introducing myself. My name is Sean O'Broin and I am your Executive Representative for Nation 12 (Ireland) on the Association's Executive Committee. I am a Chartered Member of the Institute of Internal Auditors and recently retired from work as an internal auditor, which gives me a little more time to devote more effort to the AOUG in Ireland.

Efforts to re-energise and reinvigorate Ireland in both Belfast and Dublin were started during the last year. In the North, two meetings were held in Belfast and I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to John Ringland, the local contact in Northern Ireland for all his efforts at regeneration. I had come to the end of my term of Office at the AGM in Liverpool in May 2012 and it was originally my intention to stand down from the EC but I have agreed to be co-opted for another year with a view to developing the situation.

I am therefore proposing informal social get-togethers in both Dublin and Belfast. The first of these socials is arranged for 8.00 pm on Tuesday, 11th September 2012 in the Teachers Club, Parnell Square, Dublin 2, when it will give us the opportunity of getting to know each other and planning activities and ideas for the future. Firstly I hope that you will come with detailed ideas for the Winter months and also some suggestions for the long term. If each member was prepared to take responsibility either individually, or with one or two other members, then we would soon have a diverse programme of events throughout Ireland and be able to once again thrive and prosper as a truly vibrant and dynamic organisation.

So far I have had suggestions for visits to Birr Castle, where its telescope would be of interest especially to those doing science, Clonmacnoise; and Clonfert, which would be of interest to anyone who has studied history.

Classical Association of Ireland

I have been contacted by a member of AOUG who is also involved with the Classical Association of Ireland, which might be of interest to some of our members. I am therefore going to attend their next lecture entitled 'Here lieth v-18th Century Folk Art and Carvings in the Graveyards of Wicklow' to be given by Chris Corlett at 8pm on Friday 21st September in the United Arts Club, 3 Upper Fitzwilliam Street Dublin 2. I hope that other AOUG members will join me there. Please note that this lecture follows their Association AGM which is at 7.30pm The Classical Association of Ireland has branches throughout Ireland, including Cork, Dublin, Galway, Limerick, Sligo and the South East so if these lectures are of interest to AOUG members, they might help to provide a focal point in those areas to help establish local AOUG groups. I can arrange to provide a schedule of their other events for anyone interested.

News of Our Association

The Annual General Meeting and Social Weekend was held in May this year at the Britannia Adelphi Hotel in Liverpool and was ranked on the feedback forms from the attendees, as one of our best to date. Excursions included visits to the Maritime Museum, the New Museum of Liverpool, Speke Hall, the Beatles Story and we also rode on the “yellow duckmarine” around the streets and water front of Liverpool. Being in Liverpool, the theme for the speaker and the music was The Beatles and the Association booked, Peter Piper, (an OU tutor and AOUG Member), to be both the speaker and the musical entertainment along with his partner Christine. We were therefore guaranteed a really good lively evening and found many hotel staff, and visitors from other events within the hotel, coming to stand and listen at the door to our function room. Members travelled from all over the UK and we also had members from Southern Ireland, from France and another from Malta, so please don't think this is just for UK members. We would really love to see you all.

One of the many discussions at the official AGM sessions, was that of the AOUG's current relationship with the OU. AOUG is going through a difficult time for recruitment as we no longer have our own stand at degree ceremonies, nor are AOUG as an organisation, invited to work on the Alumni stand at these events. Thus we have lost that vital face to face contact with new graduates and the ability to pass over the enthusiasm we have for our Association, and our passion for our University, which in the past has encouraged new graduates to want to join us. Now we face the challenges of only being able to have very limited contact via OU electronic communications. A full report on the current AOUG/OU situation is included as an insert in your next OMEGA so please let us have your thoughts. AOUG needs to embrace new technologies and develop for the challenges ahead.

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. All contributions for these pages should be sent to me to forward to the AOUG Office. Once we have a series of interesting activities on offer in Ireland we will be able to really develop these pages. Let us try to make the Irish pages a really inspiring section.

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 bringing 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 **0 (44) 1908 653316** to check directly. Also you can use this facility to contact Cheryl to update your e-mail address or any other changes in your contact details.

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 you soon be able to purchase items direct from the website through a secure facility. We are therefore hoping that this 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. As you will see in the next OMEGA we have just introduced a storm umbrella – perfect for the dreadful Summer that the UK is having and no doubt for a lot of you too, but if your weather is currently a lot hotter and dryer than ours, then it will double as a sunshade too. Please let us know what sort of Trading items would really interest you, and we'll research the possibility for you.

Then another area to be developed shortly is that of an archive for all e-newsletters for the various Regions and Nations and so you will shortly be able to see what is going on in all areas of the Association and to read many articles from individual contributors.

Contributions for our Irish Local Newsletter

One thing that is really missing from this Newsletter for AOUG in Ireland is the local interest and that is where you all come in. Articles are required for future editions on any subjects of local interest that you feel would appeal to other Irish members. Your experiences of study with the OU : your thoughts on current developments within the OU : postgraduate opportunities : how OU has helped your career or your personal life : original articles about your local area : original articles about your other hobbies etc. – the list of possibilities is endless. If it interests you then it is sure to interest another graduate.

Or how about, puzzles or competitions, poetry or prose – we are not controlled by the regulations governing OMEGA, or the website, and so it does not have to be restricted to just AOUG or OU related items. Photos can be included but thought must be given to those Newsletters needed to be printed out and the cost involved. However whatever you send me must be all original work or have the copyright permission of the originator. So have a go – be inspired, then send me your items electronically please to ssob3012@gmail.com

Life Membership

However have you ever considered Life Membership? This is a really good option for Rest of the World members as it has two flat rates regardless of where you live - £600 (UK Pounds) for those of you under the age of 60 years and £400.(UK pounds) for those aged 60 years or above. If you decide to do this, Cheryl can explain it for you. Then if you send a passport type photo (head and shoulders on a pale background) suitably verified by a person currently employed in a professional occupation, we can arrange for a special Life Member membership card to be produced for you.

If you become a Life Member you never need to worry about renewals or subscription increases ever again and you will also be showing your support and belief in your Association.

European Weekend in Rouen Friday 7th – Sunday 9th September 2012

Anyone fancy a European Weekend in Rouen , organised by the Local Contact for Europe. A two night stay with B&B at the Hotel Ibis, Rouen, Normandy is available, plus a tour of Rouen included for £99 (UK pounds) /13 euros per person for those sharing a bedroom or £156 (UK pounds) /179 euros for single occupancy. Extra nights and additional extras can be arranged such as visits to: Monet`s Garden, in Giverny, visit to Bayeux or tour of the D Day beaches. Places are very limited and the date for deposits of 40 (sterling) /50 euros has already passed so you will need to contact Patricia Cowling, cowling@wanadoo.fr immediately to see if there are any places are still available, but it certainly looks like an event worth attending. Booking forms are available from www.aoug.org.uk/Europe

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, which I know some of you came over for. 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 to celebrate.

Why should all the celebrations be in mainland UK? We want to be able to share the celebrations too, so can you start thinking now about how Ireland could celebrate in 2013 as I will need to take my suggestions for such events to the next Executive Committee meeting at the beginning of October this year. All your ideas will be researched, and if financially and logistically viable, will be advertised in OMEGA, on the AOUG website and via these local Newsletters.

Diary Dates

DATE	EVENT
Tuesday, 11 th September 2012	<p>Meet at 8pm in the Teachers Club, Parnell Square, Dublin 2,</p> <p>Informal meeting to get to know each other and to plan activities for the Winter months and formulate ideas for developing AOUG in Ireland</p>
Friday 21 st September 2012	<p>Meet Executive Representative for 8pm for a Classical Association of Ireland lecture entitled 'Here lieth v-18th Century Folk Art and Carvings in the Graveyards of Wicklow' by Chris Corlett (This follows their Association's AGM held at 7.30pm) in the United Arts Club, 3 Upper Fitzwilliam Street Dublin 2.</p> <p>AOUG members are being invited as guests, so please let me know in advance if you are able to attend.</p>
Friday 5 th October 2012	<p>AOUG Foundation for Education – Faculty Award Ceremony and AOUG Foundation Lecture with buffet lunch.</p> <p>Arrive by 11.30 am ready for Ceremony at 12.00 noon. Presentation of Research Awards for candidates from 8 different research areas. Hear and view displays about the variety of fascinating research currently being undertaken within the OU.</p> <p>Buffet lunch included at 1.00pm when you can meet and talk with other AOUG members, research students and their supervisors, and OU dignitaries,</p> <p>Then reassemble for the Annual AOUG Foundation Lecture at 12.00 pm to hear Dr James Bruce speak on “A little light chemistry” giving a chance to hear explained the importance of light in all aspects of our lives from gaining energy from the sun to treating diseases such as cancer.</p> <p>All of this for just £8.00 (UK pounds) with tickets purchased in advance from AOUG Office. Friends and family are all welcome.</p> <p>Then why not stay a little longer and use the OU Library or explore your OU University campus with its peaceful atmosphere of beautiful, gardens and sculptures surrounding the academic buildings. Ask Cheryl in our Office to recommend suitable accommodation if you wish to stay over in the area.</p>

Contact Details

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Remember if you change your contact details to please contact the AOUG Office, (aoug@open.ac.uk) so that Cheryl Cowley can update the Data Base for you and ensure that you do not lose communications. If you received this Newsletter by post, and you have an e-mail address, please contact the Office immediately. Alternatively if you prefer to receive your Newsletters by post, then please consider sending me donations of stamps, to reduce the Association's expenditure.