



**Edition 11**

**August 2015**

**Association of Open University Graduates  
Europe  
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Welcome everyone to another Europe Newsletter.

I, along with Robert Girling from Malta, representing members in Europe, enjoyed the Association's Annual General Meeting and Social Weekend at Caernarfon in North Wales. It is a beautiful area whatever the weather, and we certainly had our fare share of rain, but this did not dampen the atmosphere and wellbeing of all the members, family and friends who were there. You can read all about the weekend in OMEGA so I shall say no more, other than I am looking forward to next year's event. Before that however there is the AOUG Foundation Lecture and the AOUG Foundation for Education Research Awards Ceremony to be held at The Open University in Milton Keynes on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015 at 12 noon. Will you be there?

The Association's Executive Committee and the Officers in particular continue to work very hard to develop the Association and its links with its members and The Open University. Recently the Treasurer set up a Corporate Facebook page and our Chairman launched a Corporate Twitter account. Both are open to members and non-members and are monitored by the Officers. The intention is to raise the profile of AOUG among people who might otherwise not have heard of us, as well as enabling any OU graduates to study our website with a view to encouraging them to join our organisation.

I know the some of you do not go down the road of modern telecommunication so you can rest assured that AOUG will continue to produce printed matter which will arrive by mail. However, the following are the electronic opportunities to engage directly with AOUG for those of you who enjoy using social media.

- The AOUG website [aoug.org.uk](http://aoug.org.uk)
- Corporate Facebook – this can be found through your own Facebook account if you have one and typing in Association of Open University Graduates or, if you do not yet

have a Facebook account, your direct link is  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Association-of-Open-University-Graduates/710287149081499>.

- Corporate Twitter – you can view the Twitter page by going to <https://twitter.com/theaoug> without the need for an account, or once you have your own Twitter account you can find us on @TheAOUG.

Have fun!

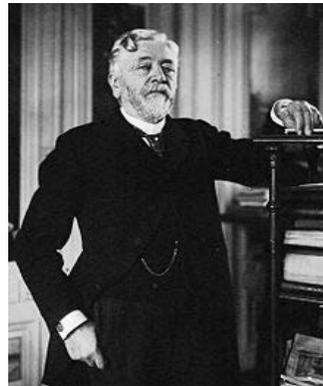
Once again I am very grateful to Patrick Noble for another article for this Newsletter. Forget the Eiffel Tower, the wind tunnel and all the other projects that Eiffel worked on are fascinating. I hope also that you enjoy my reminiscence into medieval times.

**Patricia Cowling**

## **L' Aérodynamique Eiffel**

### **in the 16<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement of Paris**

Gustave Eiffel (1832 – 1923), a graduate of the the Ecole Centrale, an elite French engineering *grande école*, was to devote the larger part of his career to the design and realization of metallic structures, in particular railway bridges and viaducts, of which probably the most spectacular example is the Garabit Viaduct in the Central Massif, completed and put into service in 1884. His crowning glory is of course the Eiffel Tower finished in 1889 to be the “temporary” centre piece of the *Exposition Universelle*. However, what is much less well known is that Eiffel, in the



early years of the Twentieth Century, already in his 70s, when he could have retired enjoying fame and recognition, embarked on a new career of research in aerodynamics, which led him to become a central figure in the early development of aviation. This activity was to keep him busy until his death in 1923, at the age of 91. As a bridge designer, he already had to take account of the static and dynamic effects of wind on structures, but with the state of the art at the time, this was mostly based on empirical knowledge. To put the question on a more scientific basis, he used the first floor of the Eiffel Tower as a platform to measure the air resistance of free falling objects of various shapes. In 1909 in order to further advance and confirm his research, Eiffel built a wind tunnel adjacent to the Eiffel Tower. However when asked to remove the wind tunnel, in 1912 he built a new one from scratch at Auteuil in the 16<sup>th</sup> Arrondissement. This epoch corresponded to the pioneering days of aviation, in which Eiffel became deeply involved. His wind tunnel was to become the prototype for numerous other wind tunnels across the world.

Throughout the 20th Century all of the leading manufacturers were to commission the Aérodynamique Eiffel laboratory to test scale models of their aircraft. In due course the scope of activity was extended to the motor industry, both for tourist cars and commercial vehicles, as well as for racing cars. There have even been tests involving Tour de France

cyclists aimed at minimizing drag due to the bicycle itself and the clothing, helmet and stance of the rider. In recent years the laboratory has turned its attention to the interaction between the wind and buildings, extending to studies of complete urban conglomerations, such as La Défense, the business quarter with many high rise buildings.

So after a century of non-stop activity, with its original wind tunnel still intact, Eiffel's Parisian laboratory is something quite unique, in that whilst being an active ongoing research and development establishment, both the building and the wind tunnel itself have been classed as Monuments Historiques, and as such have even become tourist attractions.

**Patrick Noble**

### **The Middle Ages in Bayeux, Then and Now**

Situated just ten kilometers from the sea, as with many towns throughout Europe, Bayeux has a history going back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century when there was a Gallo-Roman settlement. Going through the ages, the Vikings came and went, the English also, but eventually Charles VII of France recaptured the city and granted a general amnesty to its populace in 1450.



From that time Bayeux prospered and the old wooden buildings were replaced by wonderful buildings constructed of stone, many of which remain today. My little shop, where I sell antiques, collectables and militaria, is in a medieval building, the front, now looks more 19<sup>th</sup> century but the rear is truly medieval.

A small canal, used originally for leather tanners, runs between the buildings before taking a sharp right angle turn to flow into the River Aure. It is one of those towns where nearly every street produces at least one historic building. Recently, one of these buildings has been restored and now is officially the smallest house in France. One room down and one room up, each measuring three meters by three meters, it is now “une chambre d’hôte”.

To celebrate the town's medieval history, for two days in July, the streets are closed off to traffic and a Fêtes Médiévales takes place. Stalls are set up selling and/or demonstrating the old arts of making lace, candles, jewellery, the skill of calligraphy, stone masons hacking out gargoyles and so on. Rare animals and birds are also on display and this all takes place around the area of the cathedral, which would have been the main meeting place for buying and selling goods in medieval times. With adults and children alike, dressing up in medieval costume is a must. The joker was very popular with the children as was the archery and jousting opportunities. Troubadours, jugglers, acrobats and dancers parade through the streets and a good time was had by all.





If you are looking for a holiday destination for next year you could consider coming to the 30<sup>th</sup> Fêtes Médiévales, a tradition which will continue here.

### Newsletter 8

In Newsletter 8 I wrote about the film, *The Longest Day*, made in 1962 and about locations used for filming. One of our favourite scenes in the film is of the German sergeant, affectionately called Kaffeeanne (“coffee pot”) who rides his horse to the beach every morning to bring coffee to the troops. My husband Peter was lucky enough to discover the actual house used for the scene and it looks today, fifty-three years later, very much the same now as it was then. I have yet to get round to following up the book, ‘Normandy Now and Then’, but I certainly intend doing so. It is always interesting to see how buildings change or remain the same over time.



Patricia Cowling