



ASSOCIATION OF OPEN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES in THE REST OF THE WORLD

EDITION 3

Summer 2013

News from the Association's Executive Committee

The Executive Committee has held three meetings so far this year, one in February, one at the AGM weekend in May and more recently one on July. The February meeting is the important one in terms of planning the finances for the year and it was at that one that the budget allocations were set for the year. Our previous year's accounts were audited and approved by Haysom Silverton and we were very pleased to be told that we had extremely tight, and well recorded, financial controls. Copies of all the full audited accounts were distributed to everyone attending the Annual General Meetings in May but can also be obtained by e-mail if you require a copy.

May saw not only the Executive Committee meeting, but also the AGM, and thus the results of the elections for the necessary changes in the committee's composition. All elected posts are for a three year period and each year a third of the committee's positions, in a prescribed rotation, are open to nominations and elections. Other positions may also need by-elections if a member is unable to serve the full three year period. At the AGM meeting new Executive Representatives, Rosemary Hammick and Derrick Franks, were welcomed respectively for London and for Yorkshire. This year also saw the end of the Term of Office for both our previous Chairman, Ramsey Hertzog, who had in fact been co-opted in 2012 to serve an additional year, and our Vice-Chairman, Malcolm White but the Association could have been in a major dilemma as no members had stood for election to either of these positions. Fortunately it was with great relief that a new Chairman and new Vice-Chairman were able to be co-opted at the Committee meeting. Margaret Stobirski, our new Chairman, has a great deal of experience both of AOUG and of general organisational and management skills required for the role and Lesley Sleight, co-opted as our new Vice-Chairman also has a background of committee work both within AOUG and in her personal life. Thus we can be assured that AOUG continues to be in safe hands for the year ahead. Since both were co-opted they will be required to stand for formal elections to continue after May 2014.

The July Executive Committee meeting reviewed the progress in all areas to date and finalised plans for the October Silver Celebration Weekend. On-going projects are degree ceremony work, communications, ways to encourage new members and ideas to involve the current members, and your ideas will always be welcomed to contribute to any of these debates. We also progressed the work on corporate governance policies, and review processes as since AOUG is a registered Limited Company we have many UK legal regulations to follow. However although the Executive Committee takes their responsibilities of their roles to serve you, the members, very seriously, even though we work hard, we also have the reputation to be able to play hard too and this 25th Anniversary is giving us many opportunities to join members throughout the world to celebrate, and continue, our founder Olga Camm's great enthusiasm for The Open University and its graduates.

The 25th Anniversary AGM/Social Weekend 17th -19th May 2013

The Holiday Inn Hotel Walsall, West Midlands, was the venue for the above weekend. On arrival at the Hotel there were 60 delegates from most parts of the UK, four delegates came from Nation 11 and 12, one member came from France, and one came from Iceland.

Everyone received a friendly welcome by the Executive Committee. Each delegate was given a programme of the weekend activities. Not having lived in the UK for about twenty years, I knew very few people, but very quickly found everyone friendly. We got to know everyone having tea and coffee in the Reception area of the Hotel, before being assembled for the afternoon coach to the Assay Office which is in the Jewellery Quarter of Birmingham.

We were shown around the Assay Office by one of the staff. We learned that the Birmingham Office is the largest of four licensed offices. It was founded by Matthew Boulton and other Industrialists. The function of the Assay Office is to assess and check the quality of precious metals, and hallmark gold silver and platinum; it also gives diamond certification and jewellery valuation. The hallmark for Birmingham is the Anchor. We then had time to look around the Jewellery quarter, which was very different from the old Jewellery Quarter I remember from the 1950's. Several of us went to a rather grubby café for coffee before returning to the coach which took us back to the Holiday Inn.

There was time to unpack and go to the Leisure Centre for a swim before dinner and the evening entertainment. Dinner was very good. After dinner we were assigned to one of five teams for a very enjoyable game of "Tell us a story." The stories told were very entertaining. The evening ended with a raffle.

We began Saturday morning with a huge English breakfast before going to the AGM in the Conference Suite of the hotel. The Chairman, Ramsey Hertzog, chaired the meeting with his wife Jean, who is the Treasurer. There was a discussion about falling membership of graduates joining the AOUG. This was followed by a discussion about membership fees followed by the financial report, and other matters. Two people that were present at the meeting, were given Honorary Life Memberships. These were Patricia Cowling, and Ramsey Hertzog. The Awards were to be presented at the Gala dinner. Ramsey Hertzog stood down as Chairman, and Margaret Stobirski was voted the new Chairman. The new Vice-Chairman is Lesley Sleight; Jean Hertzog remains as Treasurer. The meeting was followed by a cold lunch. Members and guests left the Conference Centre for an afternoon excursion to the Black Country Museum.



Outside the bakers and the sweet shop.

The Black Country Museum was opened in 1978, it is a living museum of rebuilt historic buildings in Dudley it covers 105,000 square metres. Its purpose is to recreate life in the period 1850s to the 1950s. At the museum there is a complete Canal Village, with brick back to back houses, a Victorian School, a Chapel, The Bottle and Glass public house, with sawdust on the floor and a spittoon! Pitt's cottage, cast iron 1930's houses, fifty five shops

including a chemist, bakers, sweet shop, an authentic fish and chip shop which uses real dripping for cooking. There is also a mine, and chain works, and a working Thomas Newcomen's atmospheric engine, used in Tipton in 1712. In the mine and chain workshops, children and women worked alongside men in dangerous conditions for long hours. There were many accidents and very little or no health care for the injured. We saw the working 1930's Fairground, and took a trolley bus back to the entrance of the Museum, which is the retained entrance to the old Rolfe Street Baths. The Museum has so much to see that a whole day is needed to see everything.

After returning to the hotel it was time to put on the "Glad Rags" for the 25th Anniversary Dinner for members and guests. There was a drinks reception, a lovely five course meal, a Chairman's welcome, the cutting of the 25th Anniversary cake, a message from the OU Vice Chancellor, and presentations of Honorary Life Memberships and an after dinner speech. Everyone looked wonderful, in their evening clothes. Guests included the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillor Dennis and Mrs Kathleen Anson, the OU dignitary Lucian Hudson, Director of Communication. We then danced the night away to the music of the Bandjacs, who played lovely English and Scottish dance music. We had another raffle with prizes given by Mohammed Motawalla's West Midlands (04) Region. We enjoyed a wonderful evening which lasted into the early hours of Sunday morning.



Part of the AOUG Group outside the Holiday Inn Hotel

After breakfast on Sunday morning we took the coach to visit the Dudley Limestone Caves by an electric narrow boat. We were given hard hats before climbing into the boat which took us through the Dudley tunnel, where we experienced the most spectacular limestone caverns, which were mined during the Industrial Revolution. We went into the Singing Cavern, viewed an audio visual show, which showed us the working conditions of the miners. There were many accidents due to the dark and dangerous conditions, where men worked alongside women and children in the caves which were mined for agricultural and motor purposes. We were also told about the work of the 'Leggers', who used to lie across the narrow boat and walk along the tunnel walls pushing along tons of boat and its contents. After a two and a half hour trip, we came out of the caverns to a hot sunny day and returned to our hotel for a real Sunday lunch. It was a wonderful weekend. I would like to thank everyone, including Mohammed Motawalla, the Executive Representative for Region 04, the Executive Committee, and all the members of the AOUG for the most interesting and enjoyable 25th Anniversary of the AOUG.

Colleen Mary Pétursson - Akureyri - Iceland.



Colleen and her grandson in Iceland

AOUG Silver Celebration - 4th and 5th October 2013

Even though you were not able to attend, from the write up above and from those on our 25th Anniversary AGM and Social Weekend in the Summer OMEGA, you will be able to tell what a wonderful celebration it was. However the celebrations are to continue as over the first weekend in October AOUG Officers have organised another special event.

As well as the extra special Award Ceremony on Friday 4th October with AOUG Honorary Life Membership presentations, along with the Olga Camm Bursary, and all the traditional Faculty Awards to research students and the Foundation Lecture, the event is extended over to the Saturday with various campus tours and a visit to Bletchley Park Museum on their special “**Are you listening?**” day. This recognises communication through Bletchley Park's history, from the Post Office and pigeon carriers to radio waves and the first televisions, right up to the age of computers and the internet. However Bletchley Park offers far more than just this special exhibition as now a Museum, it was the home of the secret code breaking operations of World War II, and many of the amazing early computers and other code breaking machinery that was used, is on show. The site includes numerous little huts where mainly women worked in secret but essential roles, never knowing what those in the next hut were doing, and these huts are set in the large estate of the old manor house, with its gardens and lake.

Then keeping the best until last, we offer our Silver Celebration Anniversary evening meal. For this silver themed dinner in the OU campus VIP restaurant, we ask you all to dress smartly and to wear something in silver – a necklace, a pair of cufflinks or a whole silver outfit - the choice is yours but do come. All members and their friends and family are welcome but there is only room for fifty so confirm your places quickly. This is the perfect opportunity for you to visit the UK, catch up with family or friends and see first-hand your OU campus. Twenty five years for a voluntary Association is certainly an achievement, you can see how Colleen enjoyed the AGM weekend, so take that positive step and make sure you are part of this Silver Celebration one! A booking form is included with this Newsletter so check your diary and book now.

AOUG`s 25th Anniversary Trading

However even if you cannot manage to join the celebrations in person, you can still feel part of the Anniversary as in this our 25th Anniversary year, AOUG have had special celebration merchandise produced in silver nickel. You may have seen these items pictured in OMEGA but the photographs are unable to do them justice and they really need to be seen to be appreciated.

These special items of a badge, a tie pin, a stick pin and a pair of cuff links can be ordered via the order form in OMEGA, (or those of you who are receiving this Newsletter by e-mail have an extra copy as an attachment now) or by phoning the AOUG Office but if you do manage to attend the Silver Celebration Weekend in October you will be able to see for yourself just how good they really are. Be sure not to miss out on these elegant souvenirs. When they are gone – they`re gone! So order now and wear your AOUG logo with pride. An additional benefit for you, our distant members, is that before the end of 2013 all AOUG merchandise will be available through an on line ordering system on our website but in the meantime if you have any questions regarding the sizes or materials, contact Cheryl Cowley, our Clerical Officer who is always ready to assist you

AOUG Foundation for Education

AOUG Foundation for Education is AOUG's own charity which each year gives a number of Awards to research students in the various OU Faculties and also to new graduates. This year AOUG are offering eight different Research Awards and to date five of these have had suitable nominations accepted. The successful candidates are now being invited to attend the Award Ceremony on the first Friday in October, along with members of their family, where they will be presented with their certificates and cheques. In addition AOUG periodically offers a Bursary to a suitable research student. AOUG has previously offered Bursaries in 2000, 2006, and 2009 which were won by Zena Barker, Helen Craggs and Stephen Arnold respectively. Each have been undertaking amazing areas of research and we hope this year to find another amazing student as for our 25th Anniversary, we are offering another Bursary which is being named after our Founder Olga Camm, who sadly died last year. Interviews for a successful candidate are to be held over the Summer, and this will then also be presented at the October Ceremony. It is hoped that Olga's son and daughter will be able to be present to meet the recipient.

Donations towards these Awards are always required and these can be by a one off donation or an annual covenant and these do not need to be for large sums of money as every pound helps towards these highly valued Awards. If you would like to contribute please send your cheque to: AOUG Office, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes. MK7 6AA, England, made out to "AOUG Foundation for Education" or ring 0(44) 1908 653316 to make a card donation.

AOUG Foundation for Education Awards for the Regions and Nations

AOUG's own charity also offers one Award in each of the thirteen Regions and Nations plus an extra one for Europe and another for the Rest of the World. These Awards are given to a new graduate who has gained their first OU degree during the last twelve months whilst overcoming adversity of some kind, over and above that of the average student. They cannot apply themselves but nominations can be accepted from students, other graduates or any OU staff, so maybe you know someone worthy. Information, and an application form, is available on our AOUG website if you would like to nominate someone yourself. There are many extraordinary graduates out there and if you know one that is extra special, please nominate them so that they gain the recognition they deserve.

Just go to our AOUG website page entitled <http://www.aoug.org.uk/awards/application.html> to read all the details. The application date is now extended until 13th September, so apply now.

The AOUG Officers, who are also the Trustees of this charity, will check the nominations and select the suitable candidates and then for UK candidates, the local Executive Representative will arrange a suitable venue and date for a presentation. Officers will arrange something suitable for the Rest of the World candidate and details will be advertise via OMEGA, the website, or a future Newsletter, so that if it is within a convenient travelling distance, you can be invited to attend.

Your Newsletter

Please remember that this is your Newsletter, especially produced for AOUG members outside Continental Europe and the UK and you have a say in what it contains. If you would like to contribute an article, a poem or a letter, that you think would be of interest to other Rest of the World members, send it to the AOUG Office and then the Editor will consider it for the next edition.

If you would like to be more involved in your Association, and would consider organising an e-mail group, please write and supply you contact details to the AOUG Office and the Development Officer will arrange to advertise your group and to support you with any ideas you might have. Please note that due to Data Protection issues we cannot supply you with other members' details but we can advertise your details and ask other members to contact you direct.

Association Diary Dates

DATE	EVENT
Friday 4 th October 2013	12noon - AOUG Foundation for Education Faculty Award Ceremony Presentation of the Olga Camm Bursary Presentation of AOUG Honorary Life Memberships Buffet Lunch 2pm – AOUG Foundation Lecture AOUG displays of AOUG's history 4pm – Tour of the OU Library 7.30pm – Join the Executive Committee for an evening meal.
Saturday 5 th October 2013	9.30am – Tours of campus Sculpture trail Puzzle trail AOUG displays of AOUG's history Buffet lunch 1.30pm – Excursion to Bletchley Park Museum 7.30pm – Silver Celebration meal in OU VIP restaurant on campus

Contact Details

AOUG Office	Cheryl Cowley	Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA	00 (44) 1908 653316 aoug@open.ac.uk
AOUG Chairman	Margaret Stobirski	1, Walton Heath Road, Walton, Warrington, WA4 6HZ	00 (44) 1925 263161 mags@stobirski.com
AOUG Development Officer	Violet Rook	5 Wallington Court, Kingston Park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne	00 (44) 191 2861396 violletrook@btinternet.com

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.