

OU Students  
Association

# OU Student

Edited by

*Roz Evans*

Roz Evans

The official publication of the Open University Students Association

## Devil is in the detail

**B**y the time you receive this magazine we may have a firmer idea about what the future holds for part-time students studying with The Open University. At the time of writing this the Browne Review has left a great many details untold and, as the saying goes, the devil is in the detail.

However, there are a few changes that are already obvious and perhaps the most important one of those is that there will inevitably be an increase in fees. For many this will be somewhat alleviated by the fact that part-time students are likely to be able to access loans for the first time. Loans may not be available to all students, and there will be many OU students wondering at the present time about whether they will be able to complete the course of study they embarked on a few years ago.

The very ethos that makes The Open University unique and why so many people choose to study this way is the policy of being 'open to all'. This is something that government ministers have continually

failed to recognise. While focusing on the economic contribution that higher education students make they forget the students whose contribution is other than just financial.

How many OU students find that studying improves their health? How many use their new found skills within the volunteer sector – either because they are unable to work or they are retired? I have heard countless stories of how study has helped with depression and has removed the feeling of being 'stupid or worthless'. Many people have recounted how they were told by their teachers or family that they would never amount to much – and I heard most of these stories at graduation ceremonies where these 'worthless' people were proving just how wrong this point of view was.

In the next few months it is going to become increasingly important that students of The Open University let those in government know exactly what they get from studying. Whether it is the opportunity to hold down a job, continue to be a carer, improve the feeling of self-worth or



any of the dozens of other reasons, there will come a time when your voice will need to be heard.

I have already written to Vince Cable and David Willetts on your behalf, spelling out some of our key concerns about the Browne recommendations and what I think they should do to address these. The Government intends to publish a White Paper as a prelude to legislation in 2011 and the discussions around this will be a further opportunity for us to try to shape the future opportunities for part-time students. I'm going to be relying on you to help make sure that all our MPs understand what the issues are for part-time students in general and OU students in particular.

Please keep watching the OUSA website ([www.ousa.org.uk](http://www.ousa.org.uk)) to keep well informed and for details of how to participate – this is your chance to try to make sure that your opportunity to study remains available for future students.

**ROZ EVANS**  
**OUSA PRESIDENT**



President Roz Evans led a delegation of OUSA students at the demonstration against HE cuts in November

# How OU writing course led to publishing idea

When starting A215 *Creative Writing* in 2009, little did my fellow students and I know that within 12 months a book would be published with 72 of our stories and poems. Here's how *At Home with Words* came to life, writes Esther Clark.

As an OU addict I continued studying even after I gained my honours degree in 2006. This time I'd decided on *Creative Writing*, probably the most enjoyable course I've done. Although there were various face-to-face tutorials, the main contact with other students both in my group and in the rest of the UK was through the on-line dedicated A215 forums where we posted exercises and exchanged ideas.

It soon emerged that the standard of writing was excellent: fascinating stories worth reading! But who would actually do something with their writings? How to avoid the likely destination; a file on a shelf? I thought I had an answer.

Just a couple of years ago I organised a project in aid of Cancer Research UK that turned out to be highly successful. I also learnt CR-UK is the world's largest independent organisation doing research into cancer – and that it is mainly funded by voluntary donations.

I could see another fundraising opportunity here; a book with my fellow students' most successful stories or poems, that I'd be happy to collate, the proceeds of which to be donated to CR-UK. I contacted A215 course leader Linda Anderson, who liked the idea and gave me permission to use the A215 Forum to invite people to take part.

Many of my fellow-students reacted extremely positively; they sent me welcome offers of help, lovely letters of support and an abundance of their poems and short stories. In the meantime I found a company to sponsor the project – Leaders the lettings specialists agreed to help finance, publicise and distribute the book.

I had suggested Cancer Research UK for very personal reasons. In 2007 I was treated for breast cancer, my husband a year later for skin cancer. A frightening one in three of us will be



Esther Clark with copies of *At Home with Words*

diagnosed with cancer at some point in our lives, and I guess we are all affected by the disease indirectly. Friends, family, even pets – it can hit us all. Yet, thanks to ongoing research, more and more people now benefit from new treatments and increasingly, patients survive the disease.

And so, although it's exciting to have some work in print, helping in the battle against cancer has been the real motivation for people to be involved with *At Home with Words*. The aim is to raise £4,000, but wouldn't it be great to go for a re-print and raise considerably more? Many thanks go to the 35 authors who sent me their work; to Leaders for their faith in its success; and to all of you who buy a copy and help raise essential funds.

You can buy a copy at any branch of Leaders; bookshops (ISBN 9780956659309); email [anothergoodstory@aol.com](mailto:anothergoodstory@aol.com)

For more details, please visit [www.peperibooks.blogspot.com](http://www.peperibooks.blogspot.com)

## Carrying on the musical tradition...

IN OCTOBER 2011 the OU Music Department will present its new Level 2 60-point module A224 *Inside Music*. A224 will carry on the great tradition of A214 *Understanding Music*, but will be quite different in important ways.

Like A214, A224 will focus on an understanding of the basic principles of music, and the development of skills to put them into practice. Unlike A214, A224 will include, as well as western art music ('classical' music), the study of jazz and popular music, and, in Block 1, examples of music from across the world.

The intention of this broad approach is to make students aware of the different ways in which common musical methods are applied to many kinds of music (without simplistically claiming that methods are 'universal'), and to enable them to understand the context of western music in the wider world of musical cultures.

Another new feature is creative song-writing. This will be one of three main strands running through the module, the other two being harmony and form.

Students will be supplied with, and trained to use, Sibelius Student music software for the study of harmony, notation and the development of song-writing skills. This will provide valuable training for students interested in writing music, many of whom will have used Sibelius at school and in their musical activities.

Unlike A214, A224 will assume some basic music literacy – roughly equivalent to Associated Board grade 3. A224 will not include a summer school. For a flavour of the new A224, go to the Music Department Website, and listen to the audio promotion.

More details on <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/a224/>

– Robert Philip, Chair, A224 *Inside Music*

# OUSA website improved

WANT TO KNOW more about OUSA support services? Looking for news on student funding? Need to purchase past exam papers? Can't find the web page you need?

Well we've now made it easier for you! As part of our ongoing commitment to improving services for our students, we've made further improvements to the OUSA website.

Encouraged by feedback from the student community, a Google search facility has now been added to the site, providing a comprehensive search service to users.

Finding the information you need has never been easier.

We've also added a step by step online tutorial for using the web conferencing tool 'Elluminate', information on online voting within

Regions and Nations, as well as made visual improvements to the site generally.

Thanks to all students who have offered their feedback on the website over last few months. We'll continue making improvements for the future.



# Response to Spotlight on Societies article

I AM WRITING to you to alert you to misinformation being spread by one of your member organisations, OU Students for Ethical Science (OUSES). In the most recent edition of *OU Student* they appear in the Spotlight on Societies slot, explaining their views. Unfortunately the piece contains a number of misleading statements.

The Open University and the Department of Life Sciences have always held the view that it is not possible to properly study Biology without studying the plants and animals that contribute to the biosphere.

Thus a Biology graduate who had not studied data derived from animals would be deficient in their knowledge and understanding of the subject area and would not be compliant with national and international benchmarks.

However, it is not the case that students of biology need to experiment on live animals. There is only one course out of the 20 that we offer that contains an experiment involving animal tissues, and students may opt out of this if they wish.

We are entirely transparent in this matter, and offer students the oppor-

tunity to discuss the issues with course team members. Few take up this opportunity and even fewer opt out of the experiment.

We must stress that no student 'caus[es] harm to animals' through their studies of Life Sciences, and it is inflammatory to suggest that they do.

The Department of Life Sciences maintains an active research profile, not all of which involves animals. Indeed, we are a recognised centre of excellence in developing cell culture models to mimic in vivo processes. Nevertheless the complexities of whole organisms cannot be reproduced in in vitro systems, and for studies of such systems, and the interactions between them, it is necessary to study intact organisms.

It is mischievous and misleading to describe this research as 'harmful'; the benefits of such research are widely acknowledged and the outcomes have had profound effects on morbidity, mortality and quality of life.

We hope that you will impress upon OUSES that they should not publish misleading statements in support of minority views.

– Hilary MacQueen,  
Head, Department of Life Sciences.

## IN BRIEF

### Keep your fingers crossed for University Challenge team

WE'RE SITTING here with fingers crossed hoping that the OU University Challenge team contestants have better luck this year in getting through to the televised rounds of the competition..

A call went out on the OUSA website for contestants last September and as usual we had a fantastic response and some great candidates who excelled in the first round of questioning.

After a further round completed electronically in November, our selected team will face the ravages of the University Challenge selection process some time during January.

As usual, we fancy their chances but we know competition is very fierce and the quality of teams is very high.

We'll keep you updated with their progress on the OUSA website.

### Find out how you can join us for the 2011 conference

OUSA CONFERENCE is back in Milton Keynes for 2011 and members are looking forward to being back on the OU's Campus.

Want to join us? Contact your local branch or the OUSA Office to find out how.

Want to know more about OUSA Conference? Then visit the OUSA website [www.ousa.org.uk](http://www.ousa.org.uk) to hear recordings from last year's proceedings.

### Key OUSA Futures meeting is set to be held in January

AN OUSA Futures briefing event planned for 15-16 January 2011 in Milton Keynes

The President and Executive Committee (EC) felt that the briefing weekend held last January made an important contribution to the successful progress of OUSA Futures.

As a result, they have agreed a further weekend in January 2011 prior to the annual Conference in April where final proposals from the EC about the future workings of the Association will be considered.

The briefing session which is taking place near to the OU campus in Milton Keynes, will be hosted by the President and each Region and Nation has been invited to have up to six participants.

There will also be some members of the Officer team and EC in attendance along with representatives of the OUSA staff team.

# Being a part-time OU research student....

It's now just over two months since I completed a research degree with the OU after seven-and-a-half years of part-time study (including some lengthy interruptions). The euphoria still hasn't worn off, which implies that the significance of completing hasn't sunk in.

Mind you, I get the impression that lots of OU students doing undergraduate courses (levels 1-3) have a rather patchy awareness of what research degrees involve and it may be no bad idea for the OU to do something to dispel this ignorance.

I can even remember when I started in 2002 that the OU's TV adverts didn't even mention that it offered the chance to do research degrees. So what is a research degree and what does it involve?

## **What is a research degree?**

The fundamental difference between a research degree and taught degrees is that, on a taught degree, the University calls the shots: it tells you what you must study in order to get the credits or qualification. When you do a research degree, you say to the University: "I want to find out about X – will you supervise my study and, if I do it right, will you give me a degree?"

There are no credits or certificates or diplomas when you do a pure research degree – you either pass or fail. There are also no TMA's, CMA's, or deadlines – apart from completing a probationary period and completing the degree!

The OU offers two pure research degrees: the MPhil (Master of Philosophy) and the PhD (Doctor of Philosophy). Despite the name of the degree, you can do an MPhil or a PhD in almost any discipline that the OU teaches – they're not specifically degrees in academic philosophy! So you could do an MPhil/PhD in physics, computing, history, education, etc.

## **The exam for the degree**

For these pure research degrees, the exam consists of two parts: you are expected to complete a lengthy piece of writing – the "thesis" – (60,000 word limit for an MPhil and 100,000 word limit for a PhD) and then you have an oral, face-to-face exam (a "viva") where two examiners who are academic experts in the field of your study enter into debate with you in order to make you defend what you have written. Depending on how well you do, they can fail you or make you correct your thesis or give you an outright pass.

## **Supervisors, not tutors**

Throughout your research, part-time students are looked after by two supervisors: one of them (the internal supervisor) is necessarily a staff member of the OU and the other (the external supervisor) may or may not be a staff member of the OU. Both must be experts in the area you want to research and both must have experience of supervising research degrees. You are meant to see the external supervisor at least three times a year and the internal supervisor at least once a year. The aim is to provide you with an external supervisor who lives relatively close to you.



*Dr Peter Green*

Supervisors are not your tutor or teacher: you are quickly meant to become more expert in your topic than they are. They guide and give feedback and make suggestions – and they assess the overall quality of your work – but you are responsible for your learning.

## **What was my experience of the doing the degree?**

Firstly, I was very lucky with my supervisors: they couldn't have been better. They were very encouraging, patient, kind, and very different to each other – but their differences were extremely creative because they guaranteed that each covered the blindspots of the other. They also handled their differences very amicably!

It has to be said that not everybody is always so lucky in their relationships with supervisors – there's no guarantee that you'll get on the same wavelength of you supervisor and sometimes it's necessary to change supervisors.

Secondly, I didn't really believe in my heart of hearts that I would actually get the degree until I was told the result of the viva. There's no interruption in being a research student (unless something very significant like major illness or a house move interrupts your study) – there are none of the gaps that many OU students can take between courses – and this meant that I felt a constant sense of pressure.

Thirdly, the first half of the process was the most thrilling experience I have ever had academically – I experienced an enormous sense of intellectual freedom and adventure. The second half of the process felt like a pure grind and utter drudgery as I went down unavoidable blind alleys and tried to get it all into shape and anticipate all possible objections to my thesis.

Fourthly, I was very fortunate to have a very positive experience of the viva. The examiners were extremely courteous and made every effort to ensure that I felt able to give of my best – making sure that the essential details of the exam were covered.

Even after writing this article, I still don't quite believe that I actually finished and passed. The thrill of completing is huge and all of the stress caused by this process of the past few years has evaporated. I can even put some letters in FRONT of my name!

Now I've signed up for a second level course – the study isn't stopping here!

*– Dr. Peter Green*

# AOUG is looking forward to a busy new year...

The Association of Open University Graduates (AOUG) held its Annual General Meeting in the South West Region this year, part of which I attended in my guise as OUSA's Executive Committee Member for this Region, alongside OUSA's President. Unfortunately, it meant me missing part of a cricket Test Match, but sometimes duty comes before pleasure.

It was certainly worth it because I met some who had studied when the OU began, before OUSA even existed – it was a shock to discover OUSA hasn't been around forever. I heard stories of brains being delivered for Psychology students to dissect in the early years and was delighted I hadn't studied Psychology then, especially with cats around licking their lips in anticipation.

I learnt how AOUG supports present students through their charity, in addition to meeting for social and educational purposes. This year's Annual Foundation Lecture was given by the 2009 AOUG Bursary Award Winner, Stephen Arnold. The title of his lecture was "Aptemers; a Novel Drug for Alzheimer's". Details of AOUG charities and other information can be seen at [www.aoug.org.uk](http://www.aoug.org.uk)

Elizabeth Mount, the South West Executive Member of the AOUG, had much responsibility for organising their AGM and told

me of future AOUG events, which OU students and graduates can attend as guests.

There is an active group in the Exeter area. Upcoming events include the Revivalist meetings where graduates 'revive' their brains by researching and discussing topics they have not previously studied. 'Prose and Poetry Bring and Share' meetings are also held. Both these events are held in members' homes and followed by a cuppa and a cake! The period the Revivalists are researching is 1790-1840.



On Friday 28 January 2011, the topic is 'Food and cookery' and Friday 25 March 2011 is 'Storytelling and what went wrong'. Since April 2008, 11 topics have been presented and this period still has many aspects to be explored.

On the last Friday of alternate months members meet for lunch at the Countess Wear restaurant in Exeter, the next being 28 January 2011.

Elizabeth has kindly offered to give further information on these events; the AOUG in general; and who to contact in regions other than the South West. Her contact details are phone: 01769579369 or email [mount.devon@btinternet.com](mailto:mount.devon@btinternet.com)

– Alison Kingan

## Disabled Students Group

### What is the DSG?

The Disabled Students Group is run by and consists of a group of students from all faculties: some undergraduate, some post-graduate. We are all students either with disabilities or with other long-term physical or mental health problems which can and do cause problems in respect of our ability to study to our full potential.

### What does the DSG do?

Our aim is to highlight areas that need improvement within the Open University that will enable other disabled students to overcome obstacles when studying.

For example, the timely provision of comb-bound rather than glued-spine books which will lay flat on a desk without needing pressure or force to hold them open; adequate exam time because some students need to take frequent breaks while having to sit for long periods or typing.

We have dealt (and are dealing) with these and many other things that are brought to our attention which could help the ever-increasing numbers of students

with disabilities studying with the Open University each year. Did you know that number is currently quoted at around 10,000 students?



### Does it have anything to do with me?

Well, you may feel you don't have a disability. You may dislike the idea of having a label applied to you or you want to keep your disability confidential. However, if you are studying with a long-term condition that affects your day to day ability to study, then maybe the DSG can be of help to you.

We're not into labels and our discussion forum is a closed members' only forum which is free to join. You don't even have

to be a member to get help and support.

But if your problem is impacting on your ability to study to your full potential with the OU, we can offer you advice or point you in the right direction towards the help you need.

We can also take your concerns forward through the OUSA (the Open University Students' Association) as part of a wider policy-making exercise, so that you and other students with similar problems will hopefully not face the same problems in the future.

### How do I find you/contact you/become a member?

Membership is not compulsory if you have a problem, but by becoming a member you will have access to our members' only forum. Whether you choose to tell others you're a member is up to you. The DSG does not disclose your information to anyone else.

More details about the Disabled Students Group can be found at the DSG website [www.open.ac.uk/ousa/dsg.php](http://www.open.ac.uk/ousa/dsg.php)

# A day I'll never forget!

Friday 17 September dawned bright and clear, and I awoke early full of nervous anticipation – my graduation day had arrived. As I had never been to a graduation ceremony before, being the first in my family to gain a degree, I was unsure of what to expect, but the guidance notes provided by the OU meant that at least I knew what to do.

First port of call was the registration desk, where I joined the shortest queue, only to find registration was alphabetical by surname, and I am at the end of the alphabet. I was a little disappointed to receive my certificate then, not after the ceremony, but logistically there was no alternative due to the number of students graduating.

Once registered, I headed for the robing area, and was glad I had printed out the OU information as the code I needed for my robe was on one of the sheets. I was handed a bundle of navy blue cloth, which miraculously turned into an uncreased robe in the hands of my dresser.

Next came photography, and I was ushered into one of a large number of 'stalls' with a camera and backdrop set up, and a mark on the floor to stand on. The photographer gave me a dummy scroll tied with red ribbon to hold, and positioned me in a most uncomfortable pose – I hope the end result was worth the effort!

Finally it was time for the ceremony, and I parted company with my guests and took my seat in the auditorium. The music played,

and the academic procession began, led onto the stage by someone carrying a mace (which reminded me of an executioner's axe as the butterflies fluttered in my stomach). After the initial address, those students with the highest Research degrees were presented first, and details of their thesis topic announced to the audience.

The Masters degrees were next, followed by the Honours, and then it was my turn.

Graduates were seated in the order they were due to be presented, and I was on the end of a row, so I was called to lead the row around to the stage steps. The butterflies were now doing somersaults as I climbed the steps and handed my card to the announcer. As my name was called I choked up, remembering the hard work I had put in to gain the degree and the fact that my mum hadn't been able to make the ceremony due to ill-health. As I shook hands with the presiding officer the tears welled. She congratulated me on my achievement, and told me to keep smiling. I nodded, and made my way across the stage and back to my seat, feeling an enormous sense of relief and yet achievement.

When all the graduates had been presented the presiding officer addressed the audience

before the academic procession left the auditorium, followed by the new graduates. After returning my robes we battled the London rush hour again to return home tired but exhilarated. My graduation day is certainly a day I will never forget.

– Glenda Youde



Glenda with her family at the ceremony

## So happy and proud for everyone

I was lucky enough to be invited by the President to attend the graduation ceremony at Versailles in September (thanks Roz!)

What a day it was. I've helped with marketing at Glasgow for years, but this was something else. We stayed in the same hotel as the OU staff and OUSA marketing volunteers, so there was quite a convivial atmosphere over breakfast. And the location? Step out of the front door, turn left and there's an enormous gilt palace in front of you. Not bad, eh?

Over breakfast we could see people beginning to arrive from the train station opposite; the excitement was building already! By the time we'd dolled ourselves up and headed up to the Palais de Congres the front gates of Versailles were liberally decorated with our blue-hooded peacocks, posing for the ultimate graduation photos.

When we arrived at the Palais de Congres we were ushered upstairs

through the 'no entry' barrier – the full VIP treatment.

Back downstairs everything was in full swing. Graduates and their families were both inside and out, having photos taken and enjoying the sunshine. T-shirts were flying off the stall. We enjoyed speaking to graduates from all over Europe.

After lunch we were off, all lined up and fully spruced. The saints came marching in, according to the jazz quartet. Maybe it was the wine over lunch, maybe it was the location, but it all seemed warmer (quite literally, under the strong stage lights!), friendlier, less formal than I was expecting. The cheers seemed louder and more welcome – the Pro Vice Chancellor in the hot seat, Denise Kirkpatrick, positively encouraged it. And we on the stage were clapping and stamping even harder when a hugely smiling Mariane Cantieri, our very own VP Education, crossed the stage. I asked her later if she'd felt happy and proud. "Yes,"

she replied. "I smiled all the way through, so I was happy and proud for everyone."

The honorary graduate was Mark Shuttleworth – Mr Ubuntu himself. I'm a total technophobe, but even I'd heard of him. He gave a marvellous speech, congratulating all the graduates on their achievement. His advice to them? "Be bold." Listen to a man who knows.

After the ceremony there was a champagne reception for all the graduates and their guests. The children were thrilled with the plentiful supply of Haribo sweets! Mark Shuttleworth spent at least an hour speaking to, and being photographed with, the happy graduates. The party spilled out on to the street, but no-one seemed to mind – you could almost touch the happiness.

In the evening we watched fireworks over Versailles. "Isn't it nice of them to do this for graduation?" I said to Mariane. "Yes, isn't it," she replied.

– Tina Ng-A-Mann

# Dates for your diary

If you would like to see your event advertised here, please contact OUSA Office, well in advance of your event as OU Student has a long lead in time.

## LOCAL EVENTS

The list below features some of OUSA branches across the regions. If you can not see an entry for your local area, see the 'ousanearyou' website ([www.ousanearyou.org.uk](http://www.ousanearyou.org.uk)), which will contain more information.

### Argyll and Bute Branch

Social meetings on the last Thursday of the month at 7.30pm in the Black Bull, Rothesay. Contact Madeleine on [argyll-bute@ousascotland.org.uk](mailto:argyll-bute@ousascotland.org.uk)

### Belgium Branch

Contact Mike Deverell via FirstClass for further details.

### Bournemouth & Poole Branch

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month, 8.30pm  
The Sloop, 5 Commercial Road, Poole, BH14 0HU. A second meeting is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at the Grasshopper 8pm onwards, 139-41 Bournemouth Road, Parkstone, Poole. Contact Greg on [gpoc3@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:gpoc3@student.open.ac.uk)

### Brighton, Hove & Lewes Branch

1<sup>st</sup> Monday of every month, 7.30pm  
Cricketers Pub, Black Lion Street, Brighton. Contact Colin on [cp438@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:cp438@student.open.ac.uk)

### Bristol Branch

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month, 8.30pm  
Horts City Tavern, Broad Street, Bristol. For further details see [www.ousabristol.org.uk](http://www.ousabristol.org.uk)

### Cambridge Branch

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month, 8pm. For venue or further information contact [ousa.cambridge@googlemail.com](mailto:ousa.cambridge@googlemail.com) or visit our blog at <http://ousacambridge.blogspot.com/>

### Cheltenham Branch

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month, 7.30pm,  
Norwood Arms, Leckhampton Road, Cheltenham. Contact Chris on [ceb8@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:ceb8@student.open.ac.uk)

### Dorset Branch

Evening meetings are held in Weymouth. For more information contact Natasha on [nesims@madasafish.com](mailto:nesims@madasafish.com)

### Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders Branch

Meetings currently 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month, 7pm, Milnes Bar – upstairs bar (not cellar bar) – off Rose Street, Edinburgh. Contact Kitty on [\[cotland.org.uk\]\(http://cotland.org.uk\) for further information.](mailto:elb@ousas-</a></p>
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### Gwent Branch

Contact Celia on 01633 483423 or [cpw73@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:cpw73@student.open.ac.uk)

### Glasgow & Clyde Valley Branch

Contact Amish on [Glasgow-clyde@ousas-](mailto:Glasgow-clyde@ousas-cotland.org.uk)

### Gloucester Branch

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month, 8pm,  
Robert Raikes' House pub, 36-38 Southgate Street, Gloucester. Online meeting a week before face-to-face meeting in FirstClass branch forum. Contact Andrew on Andrew Gibbons3 via FirstClass

### Harlow Branch

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday every month, 8pm, The Coach & Horses, Bishop's Stortford. Contact Andy on [andydavis.23@](mailto:andydavis.23@btopenworld.com)

### Hastings Branch

Last Saturday of the month regular meeting, 11am in BHS restaurant, Priory Meadow, Hastings, for coffee and chat. Families welcome. You can also get an OUSA Student card if you bring along a passport-sized photo and a recent letter from the OU confirming your student status.

### Haverfordwest Branch

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month, 7.30pm,  
Haverfordwest Cricket Club, Dale Road, Haverfordwest. Contact Mair Kromrei via email on [gmk64@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:gmk64@student.open.ac.uk)

### Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds Branch

See [www.ousasuffolk.org.uk](http://www.ousasuffolk.org.uk) for further information

### Isle of Wight Branch

Branch meetings on 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month at various venues around the island. See the branch conference on FirstClass for more details.

### Lancaster Branch

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday every month, 7.30pm, bar of Gregson Institute, Moor Lane, Lancaster. Contact Sybil on [smr456@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:smr456@student.open.ac.uk)

### Liverpool Branch

Last Thursday every month, 8pm, Dr Duncan's pub, St Johns Lane, Liverpool. Contact Rathi on [rathigua@hotmail.com](mailto:rathigua@hotmail.com) for further details.

### London Branches

See the website [www.ousalondon.org.uk](http://www.ousalondon.org.uk) for further information.

### Orkney and Shetland Branch

Contact Marilyn on [Orkney-](mailto:Orkney-shetland@ousascotland.org.uk)

### Oxford, Abingdon & Witney Branch

4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month, 8pm,

The Dukes Cut, Park End Street, Oxford. Contact [oxford-ousa@gmail.com](mailto:oxford-ousa@gmail.com) for further information or see the website [www.ousa-oxford.org.uk](http://www.ousa-oxford.org.uk)

### Southport Branch

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month, social meeting in Wetherspoons on Lord Street, Southport, 8pm. Contact Bob for further details, Bob Mehew, Server 2 on FirstClass.

### South West Scotland Branch

Contact George on [sw-scotland@](mailto:sw-scotland@ousascotland.org.uk)

### Stockport & Cheadle Branch

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday every month, 8pm, The Railway Inn, Wellington Road North, Stockport. Contact [ousa.stockport@googlemail.com](mailto:ousa.stockport@googlemail.com) for further details

### Swansea & Llanelli Branch

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday every month, 7.30pm, The Eli Jenkins, Oxford Street, Swansea. Contact [djt292@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:djt292@student.open.ac.uk) for further details.

### Tayside & Fife Branch

Contact David [tayside-fife@ousascot-](mailto:tayside-fife@ousascotland.org.uk)

### York Branch

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday every month, 7.30-9pm, alternate formal meetings at St Johns College, Lord Mayors Walk, York, and social meetings at The Black Swan, Peaseholme Green, York. Up to date details can be found on [www.york.ousayorkshire.org.uk](http://www.york.ousayorkshire.org.uk)

# OU Law Society back in business

The OU Law society has been successfully re-formed and is a real testimony to the determination of students, and former students, to have an effective and representative society.

The society is open to law students and those interested in law, and sets out its purpose in three key aims: promoting

access to justice; creating engagement among like-minded members; and promoting a passion for law and legal education.

Although still a young society, the last few months have seen exciting things happening, with strong links being established with legal bodies, a resounding vote of confidence from the student body, an effec-

tive committee election taking place, and a fully approved constitution being adopted.

There will be a small annual charge for membership, and details are available from the society's website.

The OU Law Society website is available via [www.ouls.org](http://www.ouls.org) and has a sign-up form for anyone wishing to join.

**OU Student, the publication of the Open University Students Association, is edited by the OUSA President. Most of the articles are written by students of the University. It is produced on OUSA's behalf by the Communications department of The Open University. Editorial enquiries and contributions should be addressed to: Als Ryan, Open University Students Association, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6BE. Telephone: +44 (0) 1908 652026 Fax: +44 (0)1908 654326 Email: [ousa@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:ousa@student.open.ac.uk) OUSA website: [www.ousa.org.uk](http://www.ousa.org.uk)**

## IF YOU WANT INFORMATION ABOUT OUSA PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM

### DEMAND EXTRA – DEMAND YOUR NEW NUS CARD

The NUS Card 'Demand Extra' is available to OU students. The 2010/2011 NUS Extra card is now on sale and the price has increased by £1 to £11 for a year's subscription, and for an extra £1.99 you can obtain the International Student Identity card (ISIC) upgrade which is a real bonus for travellers. The ISIC card gives access to discounts in the UK as well as 116 countries around the world. It also provides excellent savings on travel including international flights. This is a card already valued by the student population at large. The NUS Extra Card will be accepted as valid student identification on your travels and at your OU exams. You can also enter competitions, apply for special offers and receive discount updates online. For more details of the amazing range of discounts on offer and to apply go to [www.nusextra.co.uk](http://www.nusextra.co.uk) Important note: This card is available from 5 August 2010 and is valid until 31 August 2011. Applications are only available online. All you need is a photo to upload and your credit or debit card details to hand. Make sure you know your OU Student personal identity (PI) number for current student verification.

### OUSET DONATION

OUSET, The Open University Students Educational Trust, is a registered charity, administered by OUSA, and is designed to help Open University students in financial need. Its funds are almost entirely generated by donations and fundraising activities of fellow students. Any donation is welcome.

### REPRESENTATIVES ON CENTRAL COMMITTEES

If you are interested in representing your fellow students on Open University central committees and boards, please tick the box.

### SUPPORT LINKS

Tick the box for further details about becoming a Student Support Link, Disabled Student Link or Student Academic Link (circle area of interest).

### REPRESENTATIVES AT RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

If you are interested in being a rep at residential schools in the future, please tick the box for a recruitment pack and application form.

### DISABLED STUDENTS GROUP

This group is open to all those disabled students interested in helping OUSA to achieve its equality policy. Please tick the box if you are interested in receiving details of how to register with the Disabled Students Group.

### GRADUATION CEREMONIES

Tick the box for details of how you can represent OUSA at an OU Graduation ceremony.

### OU STUDENT MEMBERSHIP CARD

Whilst all students are automatically members of OUSA, we do provide a free membership card. This may secure discounts from some retailers and service providers, and counts as identification for OU Exams. Please send in one passport sized photograph, proof of student identity/ correspondence from the OU with your PI number on and a 2<sup>nd</sup> class stamp for return of your card (or alternatively enclose 20p). Documents will be returned with your card

*Please allow 28 days for delivery of all OUSA Services.*

## ORDER FORM

OUUSA information is recorded on computer. OUSA is registered under the Data Protection Act.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student Number \_\_\_\_\_ Region Catchment \_\_\_\_\_ Area Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Tel No \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I include a donation to OUSET.

Please send completed form and enclosures to:

**OUUSA Office, (OUS22), PO Box 397, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6BE Fax: +44 (0)1908 654326.**