



SPRING 2011

Dear Student,

Welcome to the second newsletter of the Open University Students Association National Forum of Ireland. My name is Siobhán Cahalin and I am the Communications Officer of the Forum. My fellow officers are Janet Hitchin, Secretary, and John Murphy, Treasurer. Our contact details are given in this newsletter.

All students are automatically members of OUSA when they enrol with the Open University, and will have access to our online Forum. There are currently seven OUSA branches in the Republic of Ireland (RoI), or Region 12 as it is signposted on the website. You will find out your own branch from the personal details section on your Student Home Page.

How To Find Us

In your web browser go to: www.open.ac.uk/students

Enter your Open University username, it will be in the format xx123 [where xx are your initials], and password.

A screenshot of a web login form. It features two input fields: the top one is labeled 'username' and the bottom one is labeled 'password'. Below these fields is a green 'Sign in' button. The entire form is enclosed in a red rectangular border.

You will then
page. Click on
the screen.

access your StudentHome
'OU Life' near the top of

On the right of the page, click on the
'OUSA forums' link.

fications **OU Life** Study Support



OU Students Association

Talk to other students in [OUA forums](#), or to students from your course or subject area, via the [OUA Study Rooms](#). Get support from [other](#)

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| <input type="checkbox"/> OU Graduates | <input type="checkbox"/> OU-Alumni | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Chat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Conference 2010 | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Degree Ceremonies | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Forum Requests |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Help | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Interests | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA ISG Inclusion Student Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Lifestyle | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Matters | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Open Day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Progress of Resolutions | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Regions | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Resi School |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Signpost | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Social Area | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Societies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Virtual Hustings | <input type="checkbox"/> Peer Support On-line | <input type="checkbox"/> Sesame |

Click on 'OUSA Ireland'

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| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA East Midlands | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA East of England | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA General Regional | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Ireland | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Newsletter Temp and Tips | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA North | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Click on 'OUSA RoI'

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| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Br Athlone | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Br Dublin North | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA B South |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Matters | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA NI Noticeboard | <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA N Ireland |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> OUSA Signpost | | |

If you have any problems accessing the online forum, please e-mail me at: sc2486@student.open.ac.uk and I will do my best to resolve them.

Contact Details for National Forum of Ireland Officers:

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Janet Hitchin – jh6534@my.open.ac.uk

John Murphy – John Murphy 5,oufcnt2.open.ac.uk

ROI NATIONAL FORUM

It's a little over one year since we re-started the R O I National Forum. All students living in the R O I are invited to attend our meetings. The next meeting will take place on-line in the R O I FirstClass Forum for a week from the 7th March.

Please come along and chat to fellow students about courses, tutorial venues or whatever takes your fancy, as well as the topics under discussion.

OUSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2011

This really is an exciting year to be involved in the O U Students Association and we are hoping for the biggest turn out possible for our Annual Conference which takes place on the Open University Campus, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes from Friday 15th April to lunch time on Sunday 17th April. Accommodation is in single, en-suite rooms and all travel, meal and accommodation expenses are paid by OUSA. This is your opportunity to see your own University's Campus, including Walton Hall itself, and to meet and socialise with students from Ireland, Britain and Continental Europe. Everyone is exceptionally friendly and first time attenders invariably find the OUSA Conference a highly enjoyable occasion.

If you wish to attend Conference please contact the Irish representative on the OUSA Executive Committee, Dermot O'Rourke. Please e-mail Dermot for further information. His e-mail address is:

ousao38@guest.open.ac.uk

We need your details by Sunday, 13th March at the latest. But hurry as places are limited and are allocated on a first come basis.

More information about OUSA can be found on our website at:

<http://www.open.ac.uk/ousa/>

If you click on 'Conference and Elections' on the home page you can get more information about standing for election as the Irish representative on the OUSA Executive Committee. Or you can just e-mail Dermot who will be happy to supply the information.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Entries for our inaugural photo competition closed on 31st January, 2011. The winning entry is Tom Richardson's photo of a Frosted Window.



Thank you all for entering the R O I Photographic Competition. The standard of the competition was very high and the judges had a difficult time selecting the winner. We would like to offer our congratulations to Tom for his clever composition.

Full details of the winning entry and the runners up are posted on the R O I forum, as well as the photographs.

SLEEPY TIME by Dermot O'Rourke

'More chips, love?'

'Yes please, just a few'.

Looking at my already fully-laden plate, I knew in my heart I should have answered 'No thanks'. But who can resist chips, battered cod and mushy peas? Certainly not me! So I yielded to temptation and the friendly Lancastrian serving lady, who could have stepped straight out of *Coronation Street*, heaped a liberal further helping of chips on to the plate.

It was lunch-time in the cafeteria of the University of Manchester, on an oppressively hot Wednesday in August. I was attending my very first Open University Residential School and loving every moment of it. My tutor group comprised a friendly bunch of people who, while we studied hard, did not neglect the social aspects of student life. I had been in Manchester since Saturday and by now the heady combination of late, alcohol fuelled nights, full English breakfasts and hearty three course lunches and dinners, was taking its toll on my energy levels. As I left the lunch table, I thought longingly of bed. What would I not have given for a few hours' afternoon nap?

But such an attractive prospect was not possible as duty called in the shape of that afternoon's tutorial. So, together with the rest of the student group, I conscientiously resumed my seat in the classroom. The tutorial was on the visual arts, specifically French painting of the Romantic period. To assist the presentation, the room was equipped with a screen onto which the tutor would project slides of the paintings being discussed. The window blinds were drawn, the lights dimmed and the tutorial commenced. Over the next hour, image followed image on the screen; marvellous paintings by Gericault and Delacroix while the tutor discoursed on the artists' brush work and use of colour.

Time passed slowly. Tiredness, aided by the darkness of the room and the effects of the heavy lunch, slowly overcame me. My eyes began to close and my head fall forward. I was in that delightful state of drowsiness which occurs just before sleep finally takes complete hold. Peace and quiet reigned supreme. Suddenly my reverie was rudely shattered. From out of the void, I was conscious of a raised voice speaking,

'I see what I am saying is so interesting that one of you is falling asleep.'

Instantly I was fully awake and alert. I found myself the centre of attention with the eyes of the tutor and every student being focused on my too relaxed figure. I wished I were elsewhere; anywhere but in that dark Manchester classroom with everyone staring at me. Somehow I managed to stumble out a few words of apology for my bad manners in dozing off. I longed for the tutorial to end and to be able to slink off and hide myself. How could I ever live down the humiliation of falling asleep at a tutorial and face again the other students and especially the tutor? Of course, by dinner time it was all forgotten; by everyone except me that is. To this day, it still remains my most embarrassing Open University experience; or the only one that I am prepared to reveal in public.

HOW I BECAME INVOLVED WITH OUSA BY JANET HITCHIN

I had just finished my first O U course when I was made redundant. Four months later, when it looked like I would never work again, an invitation popped up in FirstClass looking for volunteers to attend a Conference in Milton Keynes. I had very little idea what a Conference of fellow students would involve, but I felt that if no one wanted to employ me then I would have to find other ways of making myself useful. So, I put my name forward and waited for the follow up interview. No interview materialised because no one else from Cork had put their name forward.

Anyway, I finally found myself a job, which of course started the week of Conference, but my employer understood that I had committed myself and I went to Conference. I'm glad I did because it introduced me to a whole new world of fellow students doing their best to represent us all. One of those that I met was another newbie, Dermot from Dublin South, who has since become one of my online friends. He has also become the Executive Committee Member for the ROI, but his stint in that role will be finishing at Conference 2011.

If, after reading my story you fancy a trip to Conference then please contact Dermot via email at ousao38@guest.open.ac.uk and I'm sure he'll find a way to get you there, unless there is strong competition for places. The closing date for submission of details to OUSA is 18 March 2011 so please contact Dermot at least a week beforehand.