



OU Students
Association

Disabled Students' Group

December 2010

'Festive'

Newsletter



**A warm hello and Season's Greetings to all members of
The Open University Students Association (O U S A)
Disabled Students' Group**

First of all, if you need this newsletter in another format, such as large print or on coloured paper, please contact the O U S A Office, P O Box 397, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes M K 7 6 B E
Email: ousa@student.open.ac.uk or Phone: 01908 652026

A message from D S G Chair

No matter how you celebrate this seasonal time of year, I hope you do it safely, warm and in good health.

With fondest Seasonal Greetings to you and yours.

Cherry



and from the rest of us...

Season's Greetings and every good wish for a peaceful, healthy, happy & prosperous New Year.

The D S G Committee

A 'chair' with a view, written by Cherry Day

At the age of 59, I think I've entered my second childhood. No, not brain-wise (although those who know me well might argue the point) but height-wise.

From a 'lofty' 5 feet six-ish, I'm reduced to 4 feet one, which now gives me a height/age ratio of a seven year old child.

Until 7 years ago, as a standing-on-two-legs person, I could view and interact with the outside world around me as most of the adult population do.

Looking in shop windows, browsing and choosing from in-store displays, talking to people behind counters and one-to-one greetings: these things were all done from the same average common height as me. I now do all these things sitting down in a wheelchair.

A line of dialogue from a recent Inspector Morse episode struck a chord. The character with a wheelchair-bound wife said:

'She doesn't really enjoy going to parties anymore. She gets fed up with talking to people's groins'.

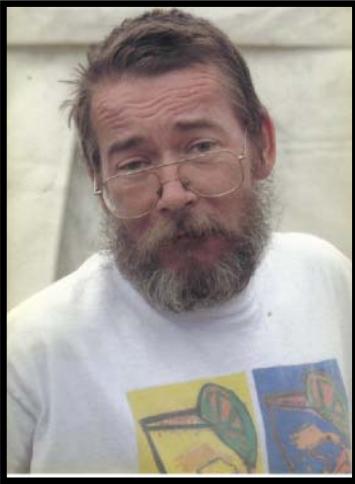
How true. From my now lowly position, I too have become an expert on knees, groins and chests and it gets pretty monotonous, believe me.

However, the world from down here can also be quite interesting and very rewarding. There are the benefits of not having to bend down to pat a friend's dog. Children are on the same eye-level as you and (as everyone knows) little people have a totally non-P C and thus refreshing view on life so make excellent conversationalists. The majority of people are very helpful when they see you struggling to open a door or reach something on a shelf and your lap becomes an excellent repository for shopping bags. Also, from your sedentary and consequently 'slowed down' position, you can (and sometimes have to) see things you would otherwise have missed in that previous rushing, walking, head down way. So it's not all doom and gloom is it.

However, there are still a few ignorant (lazy?) folk who are members of that well known Club: the 'does he (she) take sugar?' brigade. Seeing a person in a wheelchair they think your physical disability has somehow affected the 'little grey cells' as well and insist on talking over your head to the physically able person who's with you. I've found the following actions work quite well.

If the offender (for 'offender' read 'ignorant person') is behind a counter, raising one's hand or a polite cough can redirect their attention. If there's no barrier between you, a hand on the offender's arm can do likewise, or, if that doesn't work an 'excuse me I'm here' remark will solve this. However, if all else fails, a swift manoeuvre of said wheelchair to that person's shins should resolve the problem.

To all my fellow wheelchair users: 'I salute you'. There is a certainly a different world 'down here' but it's nonetheless a good one on the whole: if you can afford all the solicitor's bills for damage to people's shins that is.



Phil Ballard

The Officers and Committee of D S G are very sad to announce the recent death of Phil Ballard (pictured left). Phil was a member of the D S G Committee and friend of us all within D S G and the wider University. Phil passed away on the 5th November. Below is a tribute written especially in Phil's memory.

The Man

In a time when dreams were made, when prophets still walked the earth, and when men and women looked to the infinite basin of the stars for inspiration, there lived a man. This man was a teller of tales, a weaver of gladness, a builder of warmth. He had a house, next to the sweet water, in the sparse space of green that looked out to the barren desert.

This man opened his door to all who travelled. He offered his words to eat, his thoughts to drink and his wisdom to hold. Many came and sat next to his fire, in the cold nights of the shifting sands. Many were comforted and sustained by his understanding. Many were cheered by his laughter. Many were changed by his presence. And when these travellers were at odds amongst themselves, he poured a sweet balm, like honey, and calmed the troubled breath that blew through fractious souls.

This man held a great sadness within. A sadness that he could not put aside. A sadness that took a part of him and would not let him rest. Yet never did he show this to the travellers who passed his way. He looked ever towards the lustre of the horizon, to that point of white light between the sand and the sky. And he laughed in defiance of the ephemeral journey we call life.

And one day, as comes to all who voyage, his journey was done. The travellers found an empty space where he had been. They found rough stones in their hearts. They found a darkness in their minds. They thought of this man who had been a flame, dancing in the distance and calling them ever on. They were afraid that no-one could fill this place again. And they knew that they had been changed for having sat by his fire.

Laraine Goddard
A215 Creative Writing 'Survivors' Forum



Direct Action in support of all students of the OU

November 10th 2010: A number of your Association Officers and fellow students joined in the Demonstration against the proposed rise in University Tuition Fees along with over 50,000 other students from all walks of life, and all diversities, both full time, part-time, tutors, student old and young.

The day started out slowly and quiet with just a few eager students turning up to attend the protest against the 'Raising Tuition Fees and Education Cuts', The call to the demonstration, appeared to reach many as the numbers soon rose well over 40,000, as the procession continued on its route to Westminster from Trafalgar Square. The procession came alive with the chants of thousands of students and supporters, the ages varying from the late teens to the late 70s, part time, and fulltime students alike. Many a camera crew and helicopter crew captured the processions as it worked its way through Westminster, that was lined side to side with Students holding placards with Quotes like "NO IFS, NO BUTS, NO EDUCATION CUTS", and Chanting the same phrases at the tops of their voices utilizing their Right to Protest.

Those of us who attended had our own banners and slogans, all very professionally looking, and the day turned out to be a good day for those students who were there to get their voices heard and not there just to shout, scream and riot. OUSA President Roz Evans Gave a short radio interview to Kings College London Radio Station. The 50,000 students who turned up to peacefully protest had a fabulous time and thoroughly enjoyed getting our voices heard. Many peaceful protests continue by students throughout the UK.

Notification of Conference 2011

Some of the D S G's work is geared towards putting motions to O U S A Conference which can establish O U S A policy for the following year regarding social and academic matters, including accessibility, but cannot force change. Motions previously tabled have targeted accessibility, including websites; provision of subtitles; and equality of amanuensis provision across the regions.

Please contact the D S G and watch out for notices in our forum during January if you have ideas and want to contribute to our Motions relating to disability.

Conference 2011 is happening at Milton Keynes on our own campus from April 15 to 18, 2011. O U S A is inclusive, meaning disabled students can represent their Branch or Region whilst at the same time providing an additional voice when matters of disability are discussed.

Delegates can meet people they only know via First Class and members of the Executive Committee (E C). Conference offers the opportunity to join in debates, witness a live Hustings session and elect E C Officers. Delegates also have the opportunity to learn more about how O U S A functions; listen to guest speakers and view the Societies' stands.

About O U Student Societies

Societies are a traditional feature of student life, complementing study, catering for common interests, aiding campaigning or simply providing the opportunity to socialise. Through O U S A there are O U student societies for the Sciences, such as Physics, Students for Ethical Science and the newly formed Life Sciences Society; societies for the Arts such as Music and Poetry; and societies for hobbies and common interests such as Change Ringers.

These societies may provide newsletters, organise events and outings, hold meetings and workshops and may even encourage friends and family to join in. They all welcome members from among all students, O U staff and O U alumni.

For a complete list of societies with information and contact details see www2.open.ac.uk/ousa/p2_7.shtml.

If you have an interest which is not covered by any of these, then, with a little help and guidance from O U S A office, you can always start a society.

Many of the Societies have an O U S A First Class Forum associated with them. For instructions for finding them see www.ousasw.org.uk/societies.html#socfc

Contact details for further information:

Tel: +44 (0) 1908 652026

Fax: +44 (0) 1908 654326

Email: ousa-societies@open.ac.uk

In writing to The Societies Desk, OUSA Office, PO Box 397, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6BE



Library Services for Disabled Students Article

Standard Library services are available to all OU students but additional support is offered to students with a disability. A podcast introducing these services is available from the Disabled users support section of the Library website, which can be accessed at <http://library.open.ac.uk/help/access/>.

Database Accessibility Issues

Library Services endeavours to make services and resources as accessible as possible and this includes access to their third party, subscription resources. Library staff test the accessibility of the most frequently used databases and provide brief information about any problems on the Database Accessibility Issues page. If you have any difficulties using their resources please let them know. Results from the accessibility testing are sent to suppliers, to ensure they are aware of any problems.

Mediated literature searching

Students are encouraged to do their own literature searching but certain disabilities can make this process difficult or impossible so they have set up a mediated literature searching service. You will need to provide as much information as possible to enable the staff to search for relevant electronic material, such as journals, books and newspaper articles on your behalf.

Inaccessible journal articles

The full text of most journal articles is available in h t m l or p d f format, sometimes both. Some p d fs cannot be read by screen readers. If you come across an inaccessible p d fs contact the Library Helpdesk.

Postal loans for housebound students

If your disability means you are unable to physically access your local or university library the staff can post books to you that are held by Library Services in Milton Keynes. Whilst they pay the outgoing post, you will need to pay for the return recorded delivery postage.

Library Helpdesk and F A Qs

The Library Helpdesk can be contacted by phone, webchat and email. Contact details and guidance on the accessibility of webchat are at <http://library.open.ac.uk/help/>. Staff can guide you through searching their resources over the telephone or provide written instructions, if preferred. Also, if you follow the F A Q link from the Library website, you will have find answers to common queries in the Disabled Students Support section.

They want to know if the Library Services meet your needs, so please send any comments or suggestions to Geraldine Smith on g.f.smith@open.ac.uk

OUSA PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

In line with the changes being brought about through Futures a new photography group is being started. It will be open to any O U student in any part of the world with an interest in photography whether digital or film. It will be a safe place to share photographs and hopefully to pick up hints and tips from other students or maybe students who have done the O U digital photography course.



There will be no set standard and the more different types of photography the better! There will be a moderated First Class forum however it is appreciated that this is not the best medium for sharing photos and so access to the Flickr website is in the process of being arranged.

If you wish to register an interest in the O U S A Photography group and or ask any questions please contact me at rt974@my.open.ac.uk and I will do my best to answer any queries you may have.

Ruth Tudor

Thank you for reading this Newsletter.

You can visit the D S G website at ousa-dsg.open.ac.uk

To join the group go to the 'Join Us' page at ousa-dsg.open.ac.uk/secure/join.html.

Alternatively Phone 01908 652026 and ask for Wendy Burrell.

E-mail Wendy Burrell at Wendy.Burrell@open.ac.uk or you can contact her via FirstClass – Wendy Burrell,oufcnt1.open.ac.uk

Write to OUSA Disabled Students Group Membership, PO Box 397, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6BE.

Your elected Officers and Committee are:

Cherry Day – Chair, Les T Roach – Secretary, Dianna Isserlis - Webmaster

Committee Members:

Linda Hawkins, Val Cannell, Evette Lee, Paul Weaver

Our Christmas Quiz Questions

1. Who was the first British monarch to broadcast a Christmas message to the nation?
2. Child star Jimmy Boyd sang which hugely popular 1950's Christmas song, which was initially banned by the Catholic Church in Boston because it supposedly mixed sex and Christmas?
3. Who banned Christmas in England between 1647 and 1660?
4. On which date is Epiphany celebrated in the traditional Western calendar?
5. Who are the four ghosts in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol?
6. What liqueur goes into making a 'snowball' cocktail?
7. What is the English title of the carol written in 1818 by Austrian priest Josef Mohr originally called Stille Nacht?
8. The Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway notably) tend to celebrate Christmas chiefly on which date?
9. Which US state in 1907 was the last to declare Christmas a legal holiday?
10. Presepe in Italy refers to what Christmas tradition?
11. What is the popular name for little baked sausages wrapped in rashers of streaky bacon?
12. Which of the Wise Men was said to have brought the gift of gold for the baby Jesus?
13. The 1954 movie White Christmas was the first to be made using what new Paramount film format?
14. Which river did George Washington cross on Christmas night in 1776 in the American Revolutionary War?
15. What changed in 1752 which caused England to have a White Christmas less frequently thereafter?
16. Traditional in Germany at Christmas, what sort of food is stollen?
17. According to the UK National Meteorological Office what year (prior to 2007) was the last White Christmas in Britain?
18. The Christmas period of 1813-14 saw the last what in London?
19. How many gifts are given in total in the song The Twelve Days of Christmas?
20. The words "Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume breathes of life, of gathering gloom..." come from which Christmas carol?
21. Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean is a territory of which country?
22. Which diarist noted on 25th December 1662, "(Christmas Day). Had a pleasant walk to White Hall, where I intended to have received the communion with the family, but I have come too late..."
23. The USA's official National Christmas Tree is in which National Park?

24. John Callcott Horsley designed what first commercial Christmas item in 1843?
25. In Victorian England what people were popularly called robins because of their red uniforms?
26. Which popular poem was alternatively known as A Visit from St Nicholas?
27. Which token vegetable is often included in the ingredients of a Christmas pudding?
28. What animal is Snowball in George Orwell's book Animal Farm?
29. Yorkshireman William Strickland is believed to have brought the first what to Britain from North America in 1526?

If you like this quiz you can find more quizzes on different subject on the businessballs.com website owned by Alan Chapman who has given us permission to use this quiz.

The answers for this quiz are on the following page.

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Answers:

1. **George the Fifth** (in 1932)
2. **I saw Mommy kissing Santa Claus**
3. **Cromwell**
4. **6th January**
5. **Christmas Past, Christmas Present, Christmas Yet to Come, and Jacob Marley** (one point for each correctly named ghost, and a bonus point for all four)
6. **Advocaat** (or advokatt, pronounced 'advocar' - normally a blend of brandy, egg yolks, vanilla and sometimes other ingredients - award yourself a bonus point if you dare order one next time you go to the bar.)
7. **Silent Night**
8. **24th December**
9. **Oklahoma**
10. **Nativity scene** (literally meaning crib)
11. **Pigs in blankets**
12. **Melchior**
13. **VistaVision**
14. **Delaware**
15. **The calendar** (the English adoption of the Gregorian calendar, replacing the Julian calendar, shifted Christmas day back 12 days - and all the other days too of course - 11 days were skipped in 1752 and a further day in 1800.)
16. **Cake**
17. **2004**
18. **Christmas Fair on a frozen River Thames** (known as a Frost Fair)
19. **364**
20. **We Three Kings of Orient Are** (composed by Rev John Henry Hopkins, 1857)
21. **Australia**
22. **Samuel Pepys** (pronounced 'peeps')
23. **King's Canyon National Park, California** (a giant sequoia called The General Grant)
24. **Christmas card**
25. **Postmen**
26. **'Twas The Night before Christmas** ('Twas the night Before Christmas' is also the first line. The poem was first published anonymously in 1823 and is commonly attributed to Clement Clarke Moore, although some believe Henry Livingston was the true author. This different to the song Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer. Rudolph was created in 1939 by copywriter Robert May for the Montgomery Ward department store chain in a free Christmas promotional story. This extended the 1823 poem and was later still developed into the Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer song.)
27. **Carrot** (vegetables were in earlier times used in making Christmas puddings)

28. **A pig**

29. **Turkey**

... and finally thank you to everyone that has contributed to this newsletter.