

# OU Student

The official publication of the Open University Students Association

December 2002

## Training: the key



Alison Ryan

In my first *OU Student* article, I told you about the priorities for my first year as President. In this article, I am going to highlight one of those priorities, that is the importance of training. Training is very important to OUSA as it enables our representatives to carry out their roles

effectively and it provides the Association with a more professional image. It also gives the student an opportunity for personal development.

In the last few years, OUSA has staged two central training events annually. The first one is held in September and has been principally for the training of our student representatives on the Open University's central committees, known as OUSA's Central Reps. Last year, we extended this to include the Student Support Links (SSLs) and the Student Academic Links (SALs). As you will see from articles within this *OU Student*, the same groups participated in training during September of this year. Once again, this well organised and well attended event proved to be of enormous benefit to all those who participated.

OUSA's second key training event of the year is held in November and has traditionally been for the debriefing of our Residential School Co-ordinators who co-ordinate the team of OUSA representatives who act as a friendly face and an informal helping hand at residential schools. Last year, for the first time, the Marketing and Information Co-ordinators, who co-ordinate OUSA's marketing operations and information dissemination within the Regions, were also included in this event. In November this year, we will be inviting regional forum treasurers to the training as they are also closely involved with residential schools and other OUSA events held throughout the year.

Over the last few months, I have been consulting with our activists within the regions on the issue of training. From the comments I have received, I have made some significant changes to our training provision. Firstly, I have allocated training to the portfolio of one of my Vice-Presidents so that a co-ordinated approach can be developed. Secondly, I have instigated a cyclic programme of training so that all regional forum officers and post holders can receive training at least once every three years. This training can then be cascaded down to the local branches through regional training events.

I hope that this article and the subsequent items from activists printed in this issue with regard to the recent training event held in Milton Keynes, demonstrate to the student membership that OUSA is committed to the development of our student representatives in whatever capacity they assist the Association. If you are interested in helping, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that we take applications for Central Reps and Residential School Reps throughout the year. Application forms can be obtained from the OUSA Office at the usual contact address.

By the time you read this article, we will be in the run up to the next OUSA Conference, which takes place in April 2003 in Eastbourne. If you are interested in attending the event, contact your local OUSA branch secretary or the OUSA Office. (See below for further details.)

## Eastbourne, here we come

OUSA Conference 2003 will be held at The Devonshire Park Conference Centre, Eastbourne over the weekend of 11– 13 April.

Around 500 students attend and participate in debates to establish OUSA policy on educational, organisational, representational, student support and welfare issues. Reports are presented by the Association's officers detailing progress made in the preceding 12 months. Time permitting, workshops are held on topics of current interest. There will be exhibitions and displays about OUSA and its services, its affiliated societies and from departments of the university.

Hustings and elections for officers of OUSA take place at Conference. These officers will serve on the Executive Committee for the next year. Other members of the Executive Committee will be previously elected by postal ballot and the results will be announced at Conference.

As well as being an important and all too rare opportunity for students to meet and socialise, Conference is a vital part of our democracy. Make it vibrant and representative by participating.

If you would like to attend, contact your local OUSA branch before January. You may want to attend as a branch delegate, or you may have ideas for motions that you would like your branch to put forward to Conference. If your catchment area does not have an OUSA branch attached to it, you could still attend as a representative. Please contact the OUSA office, who will put you in touch with your Executive Committee Member.

If you are a member of a society affiliated to OUSA and are a full member of the Association, you may wish to put yourself forward for election as your society's delegate to Conference. Contact your society's secretary for further information.

You may also attend as a self-funded visitor, subject to availability of places. Please contact the OUSA office for further information. The cost will be in the region of £150 for full board and all Conference papers.

### Call for nominations

Nominations are now sought for posts on the Executive Committee to serve from April 2003 to April 2004. The posts to be elected at Conference are:

**President**  
**Vice-President Constitutions**  
**Vice-President Finance**  
**Vice President-Student Support**

**Deputy President**  
**Vice-President Education**  
**Vice-President Representation**  
**Vice-President Equal Opportunities**

Postal ballots for Executive Committee Members for the 13 regions and the three Sub-Regions (Republic of Ireland, Northern Europe and Southern Europe) are conducted prior to Conference. Candidates for these posts must be registered for study in the Region or Sub-Region for which they are applying.



Conference 2002 in session

Also elected by postal ballot prior to Conference is the Executive Committee Member for Student Academic Links.

Anyone interested in standing for any of these posts should contact the OUSA office by early January.



# OUSA training weekend

A weekend of intensive training for several groups of activists is a key event in the OUSA calendar in September. In attendance this year were OUSA's Central Reps, the Student Support Links and the Student Academic Links. This year, for the first time, the training event took place in Milton Keynes with a visit to the campus at Walton Hall among the highlights. Members travelled from across the Regions and from Europe to be at the seminar organised by OUSA Officers.

The weekend's events were aimed at endorsing the roles of OUSA volunteer activists and developing good and effective practice. In this section participants reflect on the weekends' events

"CENTRAL Reps do not have to be fervently active members of OUSA, they do not even have to go to local branch meetings; nor do they have to organise social events. What they have to be are OU students, currently studying a course and they have to want to participate in the democratic process of the Open University." John Burrows, currently OUSA's Vice-President Representation, fresh from a successful and productive weekend training event, goes on to explain the role of OUSA's Central Reps and the necessity for training.

Each year, OUSA members put their names forward to OUSA's Executive Committee to be considered for the position of a Central Rep. Applications are examined and successful candidates are placed onto one of approximately 30 university committees that invites student

representation. A Rep's work begins officially on September 1 and continues until the following August. Regional Senate representatives are elected by students within their region and serve for a term of two years.

## Training Needs

The consequence of this is that each year new Reps require training and continuing Reps need a refresher. Vice-President Representation's role in this is to ensure that training is relevant, informative and hopefully enjoyable.

This year's programme took the Reps through from 'why they are full members of university committees?' to advice about 'how to be effective in meetings'. En route, they discussed how they could effectively represent students and how they could provide feedback to keep the membership informed.

## Feeling at Ease

OUSA representatives bring with them a wide and varied range of skills. Many of the appointed Reps are used to working on committees in their 'normal' lives, but for some this would be a new experience. Part of the weekend considered committee practice and etiquette, making sure that the Central Reps would feel at ease in meetings and would feel confident when making their contributions. They were also given advice about preparation for meetings and about reporting back, essential if the hard work done in the meeting room is to be made use of by others.

Like all OUSA training seminars, much of what was learnt wasn't in the programme; I personally learnt much about presentation skills from the delegates in attendance. Whatever else the Reps gained from the weekend, what I really hope they



Reps raring to go

came away with is a realisation that they are part of a team that is important not just within OUSA but also within The Open University.

*John Burrows*

## Old dog – new tricks

OUSA is very competent in the way it trains the Representatives it sends to the various university committees. But, you might ask yourself, if it does such a good job, then why don't the representatives remain trained? In other words, once you have been doing the job a few years, why on earth should you need to attend another training session? Well, I am one of those who has done the job before; and yet I have just spent a whole weekend at Milton Keynes in a group being trained to do the job, and it was all very worthwhile to me.

We were a mixed group of new people and those with more experience, and I suppose the weekend meant different things to different people. I certainly found that however long you have been doing the job there is still more to learn – and some of it was to be learned from the newest of first-timers, because their questions make you think about things you have never questioned before. This illustrates the real point of such a get-together, where we all learn not just from the trainers but from each other. And perhaps, just as importantly, we have the chance to get to know each other and share experiences so as to make ourselves more effective in representing our fellow students. For instance, I had the opportunity to get to know the bloke I will be working with on my new committee in the coming year, and also to chat to the student who is taking over the job I did last year and so help brief him for what he now has to do.

I don't know what all the beginners made of the weekend, but for me it was fascinating, invaluable, tiring (and dare I admit it?) enjoyable. Ah well, now back to the diet.

*Frank Longworth*  
Quality and Standards Board

## New kid on the block

This weekend was the second time that Student Academic Links (SALs) had sent representatives from their regions. I must admit that as this was to be my first training event, I was probably as nervous as those who were attending for the first time.

Even though the OUSA office had sent out all the usual paperwork, I still didn't know what to expect! How little I had to worry about. In the crowd were a number of familiar faces and some new ones and yet all were friendly and welcoming. I found my sessions on plans for the coming year with the SALs extremely constructive.

For me, the highlight of the weekend was the presentation I gave to the Central Representatives on my plans to make sure that their work and the university's decisions reached a greater audience – not just those involved in OUSA but the student out there who may have no contact with OUSA. This plan was met with great enthusiasm.

So all I can say was that it was a successful weekend, I and those around me developed a little bit more, and look out for the 'Academic Issues' bulletin that will be issued around September on FirstClass and through your local OUSA contacts.

*Sue Allen*  
EC Member for SALs

## Armed and Extremely Dangerous

I wasn't sure what I was letting myself in for when I volunteered to become a Student Support Link. Largely ignorant about OUSA, I was plunged into an intensive training weekend (excellent conference centre) alongside other volunteers, some of whom sat on committees I'd never imagined existed.

Gradually during the weekend (over some good food and lots of banter) the bemusing muddle cleared – I understood better the workings of OUSA and where I stood in it, both as a student and as a SSL.

NikiWhitburn, Vice-President, Student Support conducted our sessions very well and in the spirit of a team. The role of an SSL was defined clearly and information to help us do our job was plentiful. I came away armed with a bulging box file full of useful literature.

By the end of the seminar I felt quite at ease – as part of the SSL team and as part of OUSA. The atmosphere had been friendly and supportive – and good fun.

*Irit Khan, SSL South West Region*

## Friends Reunited

The training weekend was, as usual, informative, enjoyable and hard work. It was interesting to see old friends and meet new colleagues, particularly those who would be attending alongside on your own university board or committee.

For OUSA's Central Reps, the programme covered the OU committee structure, OUSA policy, report writing and feedback and the Disciplinary Committee. The

OUSA Officers reminded us of the importance of policy and submitting reports – like a TMA with a deadline.

This year the main academic items would be used by the ECM for Student Academic Links in an academic bulletin, to get information to a wider student audience quickly. We welcomed Jane Duffield from the OU Central Secretariat to detail the OU structure. It was

very enlightening to see the complicated structure and where each committee was located. Reps exchanged information on how different committees operate. Bravely, the officers allocated a session to 'old reps' to put forward suggestions of how things could be improved and we took full advantage of this. We await feedback with interest.

*Sandra Summers*  
Student Policy Board

## All Work and Role Play



SSLs in supporting role

As a member of the Student Support Link group that managed to get to the training weekend at the beginning of September, I found I was one of only three SSLs who had attended training previously. Much emphasis was placed on the experienced members of the group providing input that might help the newcomers.

The most valuable sessions were when SSLs and SALs evaluated and discussed some wide ranging and complex student concerns and at a later stage when the SSLs engaged in role play enabling participants to cast themselves as students with difficulties and others attempted to listen and respond. It was a chance to study how other activists react faced with different situations, their particular telephone manners and questioning techniques. This exercise gave the newcomers a baptism of fire as they grappled with difficulties and then received the voice of experience.

An important topic discussed was equal opportunity issues with particular reference to the treatment of disabled students. The Vice-President Equal Opportunities gave us information on the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act, which was informative and very relevant to the voluntary task that we carry out

*Adrian Davies, SSL Yorkshire*



# Write here... Write now...

Got a gripe to air, a comment to be considered, a suggestion to share? Well this is the place where you can have your say. OUSA welcomes your letters on any issue that affects you as an Open University student or member of the Students' Association. Address all of your correspondence to: Write here... Write now..., OU Student, Open University Students Association, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6BE. Over to you!

## Dear Write here... write now...

In response to Mr G Fitzpatrick's comment (*Write here... Write now* Oct/Nov) on the use of up to date information in courses.

My most recent OU courses have both been distributed in a ring-binder format. This allows the faculty (Maths in my case) to produce the material at the last minute and for both of my courses, material was not all dispatched as a single posting. For M301, the course I am currently studying, the second mailing was being re-written as we studied the first three blocks! The faculty also makes good use of the Internet, enabling students to download the course material from the course website in Adobe Acrobat compatible format, allowing students to take a lot of material along with them for very little weight. Even if a course does not have its own website then they could still make such files available via FirstClass. As I intend to take a Technology faculty course next year I would hope that they will be using a similar system soon.

One word of caution though, if material is produced 'at the last minute' errors and omissions that may otherwise have been picked up might just creep through the system and make it into the course material.

**Tim Lewcock, by email**

## Dear OUSA

I have viewed my studies with the OU as an opportunity to broaden my knowledge by studying mainly level 2 courses that appeal to me but not necessarily having a particular theme linking them together. I generally study a 30 point course each year as other commitments prevent me from doing more. This has always been regarded as a perfectly acceptable reason and way to study with the OU. I have enjoyed my studies and will have accumulated 270 points at level 1 and 2 by the end of this year.

I now understand, from an article in *Sesame* that only 240 of these points can count towards an ordinary degree if completed after 2003 and that after that date I must now gain 60 points at level 3. Not only does this mean that the 30 points from my current course, that I am busy revising at present, will be useless but also I have to re-think

my study plans towards the end of my OU career. I have not prepared myself for level 3 study by my choice of level 2 courses. If I am to complete my studies by the 2003 deadline I must gain 90 points in one year.

Whilst I understand the reason for this change I consider it to be totally unreasonable to impose it upon students so close to the end of their OU studies. If the decision makers at the OU had the foresight to warn those students, in similar positions to myself, when making course choices at the end of 2001 the effects of their decision may have been mitigated somewhat. However their inconsiderate action means that any points earned for this year's hard work and investment in time, effort and finances has been wasted even before the examination is taken.

**Gerry Dean, by email**

## Dear Write here... write now...

I fully agree with Sylvia Tandy, (*Write here ...Write now...* June/July edition) concerning the interruption at the beginning of the exam caused by invigilators checking on identities. I do not think that it is reasonable that they should take up our examination time in this way – effectively it makes the exam only two and a half-hours long.

Frankly I need all of the exam time I can get, never having finished before time is called.

Can't they do identity checks as we enter the examination room or while we are sitting waiting to begin?

Furthermore, if there is so much disturbance already going on, imagine the fuss if someone was found not to be who they should be.

You are not alone Sylvia, perhaps your letter will have sparked enough response like mine to let the powers know how we feel.

**Gina Churchyard, by email**

## Reply from Jenny Bull, Head of Examinations and Assessment

The identification check by invigilators should not, in general, cause disturbance to students. Where students comply with the instructions to place their identification and their signed desk record together on their desk, the invigilator is able to move quietly through the examination hall carrying out these checks without causing any disturbance to students. Where students do not follow these instructions it may be necessary for invigilators to request identification. This is done as discreetly

as possible to avoid disturbance to other students.

It would be impractical to carry out these checks prior to the start of the examination for a number of reasons. Many centres have over 100 students, and the time taken to do this would add to the time required for the examination session meaning a shorter time between examinations for the invigilators to take a break and set up for the next session, or to package the scripts ready for collection. Additionally, invigilators have other duties to perform at this point, for example, responding to queries from

students. Since students may also be admitted during this period, it would be difficult to ensure that all identification had been checked.

It would not be possible to carry out the checks on entry as suggested since the check is of the identification against the desk record, and students therefore need to be seated at the correct desk.

Without more detail it is impossible to comment on any individual case, but I would like to assure students that invigilators are aware of the importance of a quiet atmosphere to students and endeavor to carry out their duties without causing disturbance.

## Dear OUSA



This photo was taken at the end of school show at my Residential School at UMIST this year.

I don't know most of the names of the people taking part as we were split up into large groups for tutorials. In the picture the group is re-enacting a painting by David called *The oath of the Horatii*, part of A103 course materials.

I hope that this picture conveys something of the atmosphere of summer school and that those pictured will emerge with more information.

**Anne Kudia, by email**

## Dear OU Student

I read with interest in the August/September edition of *Sesame*, that a certificate is to be issued to students who have completed course A103 *An introduction to the humanities*. I also note that a certificate is already awarded to those students who have successfully completed course DD100 *An introduction to the social sciences*.

I am near the end of my fifth year of study with the Open University and I hope to obtain my degree in politics after next year's course of study. As someone who left school with one O level, I still sometimes cannot believe that an Honours degree is nearly within my grasp, but after nearly five years of study I do not have any certificate to show for all the work that I have put in.

Why is the now discontinued course D103 not considered to be suitable for the award of the certificate? It was replaced by DD100 and I assume that the content is reasonably similar, as D103 still counts towards my degree profile. Would it really cost that much to provide students who want a certificate for completing the course, with one. I am sure that not everybody would apply, but there must be many like me who would value some form of recognition for a course that has been passed.

I would be interested in hearing what the university's views on the subject are and from any other students who feel the same as I do.

**Stephen Conway**

## Dear OUSA

This year I am studying S260 *Geology*, which has three TMAs and two CMAs, none of which are substitutable. All of the courses which I have previously undertaken have had assignment substitution.

Substitution is a provision for students to cope with a crisis or a problem. About three years ago, I did have a bad patch which wrecked my work schedule when a TMA was looming. Though I sent in a late and even less perfect TMA than usual, the possibility of substitution was immensely reassuring.

Problems can affect students taking any course and the OU should make substitution available consistently. The Geology course teams are considering whether to change from the current TMA/CMA mix and I hope that future Geology students will have reasonable assignments with substitution arrangements equivalent to many other courses. I also hope that other courses, currently non-substitutable, will make a change.

**Name and address supplied.**

## Dear Write here... write now...

Got my membership card at residential school in July and have been flashing it about ever since. For a little piece of plastic, it's pretty potent and not only in the way that you might expect.

When it fell out of my wallet in the refectory at a conference I was attending, it was returned to me by a very nice lady who was deeply impressed by the fact that in spite of appearance (large, dull and

stupid) I was in fact serious minded, ambitious and with more than just a couple of brain cells to rub together. A great conversation starter; think I might try it again.

Wasn't there once an advert that said 'Your card says more about you than anything else ever can.'?

**Jimmy Owens, by email**

# A challenging prospect

Early in January, OUSA sends out application forms and question sheets to prospective team members for the next series of *University Challenge*.

Anyone interested in competing must be a student of the Open University (postgraduate or undergraduate) and because transmission dates will run from 2003 to 2004, you should expect to remain a student in the next academic year (2004).

You need to be available for interview in early to mid May 2003.

If an OU team is successful in the early stages of the competition, then you would need to be available for recordings in late June/early July 2003 and then again in late October/early November 2003.

If you'd like the chance to pit your wits against students from other universities, then send your name and address to:

OUSA (UNIV), PO Box 397,  
Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6BE  
and you will be contacted early in the new year.





IF YOU WANT  
INFORMATION ABOUT  
OUSA, PLEASE  
COMPLETE THIS FORM.

The official publication of the Open University Students Association

### MEMBERSHIP CARDS

#### Discounts for the OU Student!

The OUSA Membership Card will help gain you discounts and student concessions on goods and services. You may also get discount rates for theatres, cinemas, museums, leisure centres etc. It has also been accepted for rail travel in Europe (although not yet in the UK unfortunately) and in many European venues. The card can be used as proof of OU student status when using student union facilities of other universities where OUSA has a reciprocal agreement.

All OU students are eligible, so apply for one today. Remember, it's free! We will need one passport size photograph along with proof of student identity/correspondence with student number. Documents will be returned free of charge.

### REPRESENTATIVES ON CENTRAL COMMITTEES

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

### STUDENT SUPPORT LINKS

Tick the box for further details about becoming a Student Support Link.

### 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.

### 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.

Please allow 28 days for delivery of all OUSA Services.

# Order Form

OUSA 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 enclose a cheque/PO for £ .....  
(Including donation to OUSET) £ .....

Please send completed form and enclosures to:

OUSA Office, (SES 212)  
PO Box 397, Walton Hall,  
Milton Keynes MK7 6BE  
Fax: 01908 654326.



# Education matters

There are three 'Education Matters', that I want to focus on in this issue. Firstly, some of you will be aware of the recent changes to how universities will be funded in Scotland by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC). In short, SHEFC, despite an agreement when funding responsibility was devolved to them that the OU would continue to be funded in the same way, has now reversed this decision. It has created a special grouping, the Volume Distance Learning group, in which the OU is the only member. The outcome of this change? A whopping 45 per cent reduction in the OU's overall grant! The university Council has lodged a protest with SHEFC, which OUSA's President has fully backed. OUSA is continuing to work with the university on how to effect this decision being reversed or its effects mitigated. OUSA has consistently struggled to break the perception that the Open University is a second class higher education provider. This move by SHEFC is a retrograde step. With reduced funding, as we all know, the OU will have to either reduce its level of service in Scotland (leading to fewer students studying or a fall in quality of provision) or increase the cost of courses for students in

Scotland to make up for the lost funding, neither of which is good news. I ask that you show your support for OUSA's and the university's objection to this change.

On a second issue, some good news. Many of you may be aware that the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) carries out subject reviews at various universities to ensure that courses are of a recognised quality. The university has performed well in the past (proving time and again that it is not a second class player) and the final round of that process will take place in the spring of 2003, when English and History courses will be assessed. The QAA will then move over to a system of 'whole institution' audits, also taking into account other factors that affect a student's experience whilst studying. However, the major change this time round is that students will be allowed to express their views and opinions on both the subject area and institutional reviews. The President is currently considering ways she can involve students 'out there', so keep an eye out for announcements. Get involved and have your say.

Finally, I have been asked by the university to join a working group that is looking at the current provision of the

named degrees offered by the university. The irony is not lost on me as when I was first elected to this post, named degrees were just being introduced as part of a successful campaign by OUSA, and as my final term of office comes to an end, I will be taking part in their review. I've yet to be informed of the terms of reference of the group, but would welcome your comments about the current provision of named degrees. Are there enough? Should there be more? Which subjects should be introduced? Send your comments to the OUSA office.

So, here we have three issues in which you, the ordinary OUSA member, can be actively involved with possible effect. OUSA works hard on behalf of the entire student body and the door is always open for others to become more involved. Perhaps by having your say on one of these issues, and realising that your involvement can make a difference, it could give you a taste for becoming an active member of the Association.

**Rick Holyomes**  
*Vice-President Education*

(Editor's Note: Correspondence on any of these matters should be addressed to Rick at the OUSA Office)

## News in Brief

### Stepping down

At Conference 2003, Vice-President Education, Rick Holyomes and Vice-President Student Support, Niki Whitburn will both have completed four years of office. Under the OUSA Constitution, four years is the maximum time that an Officer can serve on the Executive Committee. Nominations for these two keys roles, together with nominations for all other Executive Committee posts, are now called for. See 'Eastbourne, here we come' for further details.

### Membership Cards

OUSA membership cards are now recognised by the Open University as proof of identity at examination time. If you haven't yet obtained your free card, you can find application details in this copy of *OU Student*.

### Interest in Societies

In the last edition of *OU Student*, the plight of several flailing OUSA societies was reported on. To date several students have expressed interest and details

have been taken in order to contact them in the near future. It seems there is still interest in a Lesbian and Gay Society and a Cogit Society for philosophers. The Law Society has attracted particular interest and new officers have already been appointed. Any further interested parties should contact Loretta Souza at the OUSA Office.

### London success story

After a regeneration exercise by OUSA activists, the Regional Forum in London is up and running with a full compliment of officers appointed to all of the current posts. This means that our vast membership in London at last has some proper representation.

### OUSA in Europe

Regional Forums have recently been established in Northern and Southern Europe. With officers appointed by a virtual election carried out on FirstClass, it is the first time that OUSA members across the continent have been able to participate in this way.

**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 Group of the Open University.

Editorial enquiries and contributions should be addressed to Wendy Burrell, Open University Students Association, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6BE

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E-mail: [ousa@student.open.ac.uk](mailto:ousa@student.open.ac.uk)  
OUSA website: <http://www2.open.ac.uk/ousa/>

## Diary Dates

These diary dates are free to OUSA branches, student and graduate societies. SAE to Sesame office for forms or fax 01908 652247 or e-mail: [M.D.France@open.ac.uk](mailto:M.D.France@open.ac.uk) for an electronic version of the form. Deadline for next issue December 2, period covered beginning February to mid March.

### NATIONAL

**ISLAMIC COLLOQUIA SOCIETY**  
*December 2002* - Christmas Tide. What does Islam say about the birth of the Messiah (ISA)? Details Bro. A Butt, 90 Pensby Close, Birmingham, B13 9QJ.  
**M500 SOCIETY**  
*January 3-5, 2003* - Mathematics winter weekend, Nottingham University, 19.30 Friday - 17.00 Sunday. A recreational mathematics weekend. An opportunity to get together with friends, old and new. Run by Ian Harrison. Details, Norma Rosier: 12B Tolstachalais, Isle of Lewis, HS2 9DW, Tel: 01851 621315.

**Don't forget:**  
Deadline for next issue is December 2.

### LOCAL

**AYRSHIRE**  
*First Thursday each month* - Branch meeting/social, Wellingtons Bar, Wellington Squire, Ayr, 19.30. Details Alexander R. Gibson or George Macfarlane (both via FirstClass).  
**BOURNEMOUTH & POOLE**  
*November 7 and first Thursday of each month* - Pub night, The Grasshopper, Bournemouth Road, Parkstone, Poole, from 20.30. Details Graham, Tel: 01202 518686.  
**DONCASTER**  
*November 19* - Dog track racing event, Meadow Court Stadium, Station Rd, Stainforth, Doncaster, 19.00. Contact Branch Chair/Secretary. Tickets £10. Close date November 6.  
**REGIONAL FORUM IN THE SOUTH**  
*November 16* - Regional forum meeting, Queen Mary College, Basingstoke, 10.00.