

**Editorial.**

Going by the noise that Starlings in lead boots are making in our roof space I think it must be Spring. Well today at least.

Covid restrictions are beginning to be relaxed so it will be good to meet folk again at some of our upcoming meetings. You can look all the activities up on our Website - <https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

Please note that the Iona walk on 10<sup>th</sup> April is cancelled as Maureen will be away.

There are some new groups in the planning a Book Group, A Travel Group, and a Cookery group.

If you have a interest you would like to share please get in touch with our group Co-ordinator Linda Littlewood - [linda.littlewood2@btinternet.com](mailto:linda.littlewood2@btinternet.com)

**Goings on**

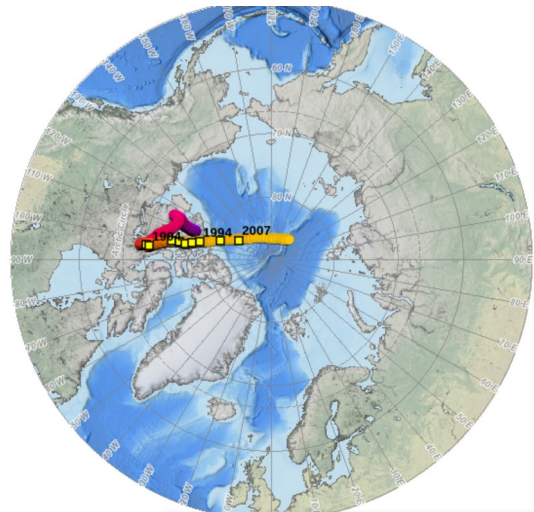
**Geology Group.**

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> the Geology Group was to meet on Ardalanish Beach but not surprisingly the forecast was not good so instead they gathered at Ron & Shirley's where Ron gave a talk about Magnetic Polar Wandering.

You may wonder why it wanders at all but all was made clear, though how long we will remember it is debatable.

Next meeting will be on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April Grass Point, upper and lower.

Keep an eye on the Website for further details.



**U3A South Mull Walkers**  
(Part of the Mull and Iona U3A Walking group)



**Spring Walks 2022**

**22nd March. Balfour, Erraid.**

Meet at **Fionnphort car park at 10.30am** to maybe car share to Knockvologan.

Walk from Knockvologan to Balfour Bay on Erraid.

If the weather is too wiid we will maybe do a shorter walk along the beach at Knockvologan. The distance there and back to Balfour Bay is roughly 4 miles.

**10th April Iona**  
**Meet at Fionnphort for the 11.15 ferry**

Walk to Dun I, the highest point on Iona  
Quite steep. About 3 miles (This walk may have to be posponed as I might be away in April. But will let you know.)

**17th May Gualachaolish**  
**The start of this walk is just south of the Lochdon road. NM 720318**  
**Meet at 10.30.** We will arrange parking closer to the date. We may have to park some cars along the Lochdon road. (More information on this closer to the date.) Distance start to finish about 5 miles

Do come and join us if you can... Just contact Maureen Bayles on:

[maureenbayles@gmail.com](mailto:maureenbayles@gmail.com)

## Art & Craft Group

The February subject included Sunflowers for Ukraine.



### U3A MULL HISTORY/ARCHAEOLOGY WALKS

Peter is recovering from an operation on one of his feet and is unable to walk far at the moment. He has kindly put together information about various sites that you might like to visit.

#### BALLISCATE/TOBERMORY

Park Balliscate shops A848 (NGR 503544) Follow track S. past Balliscate House to field gate, right up to 3 prehistoric standing stones (one fallen). Excavation 2004: Bronze Age cremation burial.c. 3,000 BC. Follow ridge right from stones to see old field boundaries and corn-drying kiln remains in bank (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century). Downhill S. from stones through gate, across valley to path right, uphill through bank to remains of early medieval Balliscate Chapel. Time Team excavation 2009, C6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> AD – St Columba/Iona Links?

#### GLENGORM

Park shop/café (NGR 441572). Return S. along road to Sorne, track uphill right and over hill, bearing left and through gate in valley to extensive remains of Baliacrach township- C19th. clearance village. Return N. towards Castle keeping left to setting of 4 Bronze Age standing stones – cremation burials excavated. Continue N. along valley to coast and Dun Ara Castle – prehistoric fort with medieval adaption, surrounding contemporary remains and possible harbour below.

#### DERVAIG

Car park B8073 at NGR 440518. Walk N. to prehistoric cairn remains with stone upright in bank. Continue through gate to 5 Kilmore Standing Stones, 3 recumbent, probably Bronze Age and apparent alignment with Ben More summit. Follow steep track downhill to forest track, right and left to Dervaig Community Orchard. Follow track and street out to B 8073 road and follow left to Kilmore medieval chapel site and burial ground. Gate into field south and steep uphill to ridge and setting of three further prehistoric standing stones, set partly into more recent boundary; Ben More summit alignment. Cross wall and field, past modern burial ground to gate on B 8073 corner.

#### LANGAMULL

Car park B 8073 (NGR 395520) Forest track N. to junction right, follow to signed track left to Kildavie township, clearance village remains – ongoing excavations. Track continues across valley up to Langamull Farm, continue down to Crossapol Bay and machair. Two low circular prehistoric burial mounds to right, larger mound closer to beach ‘Viking Grave’ ? Remains of prehistoric fort on cliff left side of beach. Return main track passing Langamull Farm; Well preserved remains of prehistoric ring-fort walls Dun Mhadaidh up steep hill right.

#### BURG/REUDLE

Park B8073 roadside quarry (NGR 384455). Follow road west to Burg and into field left beyond house to remains of Upper Burg clearance township. Continue along track and right over moorland to well preserved remains of prehistoric ring fort Dun Aisgain. Left downhill to further extensive remains of Lower Burg township. Continue west around coast path to Reudle glen and across up slope left to Reudle Cave – possible earlier historic occupation/use. Continue up left side of glen to Reudle house and remains of further clearance township. Track continues on to B 8073.



### ULVA

Park at Uva Ferry (NGR 446400). Crossing to Jetty and Boathouse Café, track right to Sheila's Cottage – 19<sup>th</sup> century homestead reconstructed. Continue on to junction left down past Ulva House (right) and continue to left turn up through woodland to gate and on to open moorland. Left at track junction and continue to large rectangular sheep fank right, cross via stile and left to prehistoric standing stone. Return and follow track to valley and stream downhill left. Remains of clearance settlement New Cove on knoll to right includes house of Neil Livingstone – father of David Livingstone. Continue east to more extensive clearance settlement houses, enclosures and field remains – Old Cove. Climb up left to Livingston Cave, 1980s-90s excavations Mesolithic occupation 5-6000 BC. Continue east along coast path past W. Clarke memorial top of Dun left, to track through gate left to Ulva House Farm buildings and return.

### ERRAID

Park roadside Knockvologan farm buildings (NGR 314203). Downhill left through field, livestock driveway to shore marked by large stones. Remains of earlier fields and building remains within waterlogged ground left, prehistoric circular burial cairn on hill further down right. Cross sands Erraid Sound (tide permitting) to Dun Aoidhean, sparse remains of prehistoric cliff top fort left. Continue west along shore past cottage to the Victorian granite lighthouse cottages, jetty and other buildings erected for the quarries and lighthouse keepers; now occupied by members of the Findhorn Community. These were created by Robert Louis Stevenson's engineer father, Erraid being the inspiration for his novel 'Kidnapped'. Track beyond leads to the Granite quarries, buildings and a lookout tower beyond with views over Erraid, Iona and to the Skerryvore lighthouse.

## Events

The ' Board Games ' afternoon due on 10<sup>th</sup> March was cancelled but this can be rearranged if there is enough interest.

On Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April there will be an Open Meeting 2-4pm Craignure Hall.  
Speaker - Eleanor MacDougall ' Scottish Art '.

On Friday June 24<sup>th</sup> there will be a 'Bring and Share ' Members only meeting.  
11.30am-3.30pm Craignure Hall.  
The Speaker is Mauvis Gore she will be giving a talk on ' Sea life, Basking Sharks '  
There will be more information about arrangements nearer the time.

On Friday August 26<sup>th</sup> there will be an Open Meeting , 2-4pm Craignure hall.  
Speaker Jenny Jackson – Trees.

As usual at Open meetings there will be light refreshments and Posh Biscuits.

## 2022 Occasional Spotlight on Wildflowers and Trees - Norma

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### HAZEL *Corylus avellana*

This March I thought, as a change from all those lovely, early yellow flowers, I'd consider writing about the hazel, a multi-stemmed shrub, that is beginning to decorate our roadsides and woodlands with its flowers!

Now, today, it is mid-February and along the roadside between Tobermory and Craignure, I have seen hazel shrubs with their male catkins or 'lambs tails' dangling, lengthening and yellowing as the pollen begins to develop and be released in the breeze. The female flowers can be easily overlooked. They are little stalkless bud shapes with a tuft of crimson stigmas. After fertilization, by autumn, these develop into a cluster of nuts enclosed within leafy bracts. So do stop if you can and look for the female flowers and enjoy the catkins.

According to "The Island of Mull, a survey of its flora and environment", hazel is the most abundant woody species on Mull. It is found as understorey in birch, oak and mixed deciduous woodland. Hazel is able to regenerate from its rootstock naturally, hence its use as coppice and it can continue in existence for many years if it isn't shaded out by tall trees.

Lovely fossilized hazel leaves have been found near Bunessan, in the SSSI at Ardtun leaf beds, in sedimentary deposits that are of international importance and thought to have been deposited some 60m years ago. (Perhaps a subject for the Geology group!)

Hazel also appears at another Mull SSSI, this time at Laggan Woodland, beyond Ulva. This is one of the best native oak woodlands on Mull.

The northern end of the site is dominated by a mature sessile oak canopy with hazel coppice understorey.

Nearer Eas Fors it is dominated by hazel with some ash and wych elm. These woodlands are rich in lichens and hazel gloves fungus that is only found on hazel stems.

Mull also has Atlantic Hazel woodlands which show that hazel is not 'naturally' an understorey shrub. I quote:-

"Atlantic Hazelwoods occur in western Britain and are part of Scotland's Rainforest, a globally scarce habitat. Many are remnants of ancient woodlands, undisturbed for thousands of years.

They support internationally significant populations of lichens, mosses and liverworts that thrive in the mild-winters, cool summers and high rainfall throughout the year."

"Atlantic Hazel Scotlands Special Woodlands"  
Sandy and Brian Coppins 2012

There is an OGHAM Celtic Tree alphabet. The alphabet and its uses have remained a mystery but Hazel is represented by the letter C, called Coll and signifies wisdom and knowledge. I read somewhere that one thought is that the Isle of Coll is named for the hazel as the early hunter-gatherers in Mesolithic times have left huge heaps of nutshells there.

Over the years hazel has not only provided nutritious food for man and small mammals but coppice material for baskets, thatching spars, hurdles, wattles, coracle frames, Pilgrim's staffs and for water dowsing, to name a few! There is lots of folklore and many legends and hazel is thought to be associated with wisdom. Hazel flowers, male and female and then the heart-shaped leaves that come to a point and are a lovely fresh lime green are the early signs of spring. In autumn there are the nuts and the pink and greeny brown leaves to enjoy. While out and about from now on you may also come across some of those early yellow flowers!

### Acknowledgements

"The Tree Key". Herbert L. Edlin 1978. Frederick Warne

"Collins Complete British Trees". Paul Sterry 2007.

"Trees and how they grow". G. Clarke Nuttall 1913. Cassell & Co Ltd

"A tree in your pocket". J. M. Paterson 1998. Thorson

"The Island of Mull". Edited, A.C & J.A Crabbe.  
British Museum (Natural History) London 1978.



Credit: Ross Hoddinott / naturepl.com

### **Flowers**

Hazel is monoecious, meaning that both male and female flowers are found on the same tree, although hazel flowers must be pollinated by pollen from other hazel trees. The yellow male catkins appear before the leaves and hang in clusters from mid-February. Female flowers are tiny and bud-like with red styles.



## Odd Activities During Covid Restrictions.

### Odd Rocks

During Lockdown I started painting rocks from the beaches and leaving them on the Village wall in Bunessan.

I never knew what each rock would become so was often surprised when various beasts of land sea and air appeared. Shirley





**And last but not least a Poem from Dee to bring back memories.**

Back in the days of tanners and bobs  
When mothers had patience and fathers had jobs  
When football team families wore hand me down shoes  
And TV gave only 2 channels to choose  
Back in the days of threepenny bits  
When schools employed nurses to search out your nits  
When snowballs were harmless ice slides were permitted  
And all of your jumpers were warm and hand knitted  
Back in the days of hot ginger beers  
When children respected what older folks said  
And pot was a thing you kept under your bed  
Back in the days of listen with mother  
When neighbours were friendly and talked to each other  
When cars were so rare you could play out in the street  
When doctors made home calls and police walked the beat  
Back in the days of Milligan's Goons  
When butter was butter and songs all had tunes  
It was dumplings for dinner and trifle for tea  
And your annual break was a day by the sea  
Back in the days of Dixon of Dock Green  
Crackerjack pens and Lyons ice cream  
When children could freely wear NH glasses  
And teachers all stood at the front of their classes  
Back in the days of rocking and rolling  
When mobiles were things you hung from the ceiling  
When woodwork and pottery was taught in schools  
And everyone dreamed of winning the pools  
Back in the days when you were a lad  
I can't help but smile for the fun we had  
Hopscotch and roller skates snowballs to lob  
Back in the days of tanners and bobs  
Author unknown

The best source for U3A news is the main U3A website :-  
<https://www.u3a.org.uk/>

The Third Age Trust Newsletter is also a good place to start and you can have this emailed to you if you wish. <https://www.u3a.org.uk/newsletter>



