
OBAN U3A NEWSLETTER

Bob is away on a much-postponed and well-earned holiday. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him on your behalf for doing so much to make sure that the science group runs smoothly and Oban u3a is an organisation we can be proud of. I would also like to thank Margaret very much for all her hard work when she was my secretarial predecessor. We hope they find the sun they are searching for and that he returns with well-tanned knees.

I am deputising for Penny this month as she prepares to go on a vegan cruise in the Amazon. Sorry, I couldn't resist the unlikely chance to get those two words into the same sentence.

Anne Archer



Janet Tricker

Many of you will know Clach Thoull, the hole in the rock at Port Appin, but probably very few will have been there at dawn in December and January when the sun rises directly behind it.

Janet Tricker has made it her mission to be there at the right time on the right days and has been getting some stunning shots, of which this is one.

NATIONAL NEWS

Before Christmas Central u3a informed us that because of Covid they were forecast to have a shortfall in funding and would need to increase subscriptions. The proposal was that they should in future be index-linked to pensions. We and many other branches objected strongly to the idea of something which only the government should be able to do. As a result, they have withdrawn the idea, have promised to make their workings more open and reacted positively to the suggestion that there should be better two-way communication between the centre and the branches.



Ardentallen Joan Kemp

LOCAL NEWS

Our speaker on February 7th is Bob McCulloch whose talk will be on 'Old Oban'.

Bob is Oban born and bred, is a retired dentist and artist and very well known in the community. Over the years he has accumulated vast numbers of photographs of old Oban recording the changes that have happened since it existed to the present day. He has a wealth of knowledge and his talks and slides are always of interest.

The March talk will also be of immediate local interest, when Jamie Macgregor and Jennifer Shaw will talk about the Dunollie Rentbook of the 1660s.

GROUP NEWS

Membership of u3a:

Please remember that, for insurance reasons, you cannot join the activities of a u3a group more than once if you are not a member. You will have received a membership card this Autumn if you renewed your membership. If you are not sure, please contact Graham Cameron at obanu3amemsec@gmail.com .

Calligraphy Group:

The Calligraphy group is now up and running. We meet on Thursday mornings at 10.30 at Glencruitten church halls. Get in touch with Gill Moore if you are interested.



Craft Group:

The Craft group meet together weekly to start, continue or finish a variety of projects. Weaving, knitting, tapestry, sewing up small books and embroidery are the different crafts being done by individuals.



Creative Writing Group:

We meet twice a month on Tuesdays at around 1 pm, usually on Kerrera.

Discussion Group:

Although we still haven't sorted out the world's problems the Discussion Group are still meeting on the first Thursday and the third Thursday of the month at the Royal Hotel Argyll Square at 2.30 p.m. i.e. 2nd February and the 16th. Perhaps we just like the sound of our own voices?

French Conversation Group:

The French Conversation Group meets weekly on Fridays at 1400 in the Lancaster Hotel, enjoying a cup of tea, coffee or hot chocolate while chatting with members in the French language. We also read a little in French, the current book being *La Tresse* by Laetitia Colombani. We are a friendly, supportive group, and would welcome new members to join us. Please contact Kathy Murgatroyd, French Group Convener.



Gardens and Wild Flowers Group:

All being well, and weather permitting, a short afternoon based at Tralee is planned for the third Monday in February. The idea is to learn about the differences between mosses and liverworts, which together are grouped as 'bryophytes'. There are lots of them in the woods at Tralee, especially close to the larger pond, which is where the group will aim to spend a little time. The number in the group will be very limited.

In March, Maurice Wilkins, former head gardener at NTS Arduaine, and a very keen photographer, has agreed to sharing some of his photos, and, hopefully, hints on taking a good shot!

April will see us meeting at Achnacloich Garden, near Connel. There is usually a delightful display of narcissi and other spring bulbs at that time.

NTS has plans to re-open Arduaine Garden in the spring. If it does indeed open, it would be very nice to offer support by planning to visit in May.

Members of the group will be sent an email giving more details nearer the time of each visit.

Geology Group:

Our next meeting will be on Valentine's Day – not that this has anything to do with geology, except that we all love the subject! So, Tuesday 14 February, 1.45 pm in the Ambo Room, Glencruitten Church Centre as usual.

The first part will be to complete the previous session on the early evolution of the atmosphere. We managed to take it from about 4.5 Ga (billions years ago) to about 2.5 Ga, so only another 2 billion years to go until we can breathe properly! Crucial in this was the evolution of photosynthesis, and that took several stages before it became the process we know today. So in the second part, Bob will take us through an outline of the evolution of photosynthesis.

Finally we hope to be able to share with you at least one idea for a summer field trip.

We hope the meeting after this will be on Tuesday 28 February, when the next session of Life Story takes us into the 'boring billion'.



German Group:

Graham, who convenes the German group, lived in Germany for almost twelve years, and hosts the German group in his house (Thursdays 10:00 to 11:30). He has never been mistaken for a native German speaker! At the meetings we each speak for a few minutes, often on an agreed theme. We then read simple German stories, and watch a video. Recent videos, from "Easy German", have entertained us with depictions of "What not to do in Germany!" evoking embarrassing memories among those who have lived there. There is considerable diversity in ability in the group, and newcomers are welcome no matter what their level.

Mahjong Group:

We are a very friendly group who meet up on a Monday at 2pm in the bar at the Royal Hotel. We usually play until about 4pm. We are very flexible with numbers and don't take ourselves too seriously. New members would be very welcome. You don't need to have had past experience of the game, it is quite easy to pick up and we would be delighted to have some new faces join us.

Out and About Group:

The Out and About group will be visiting the Scottish Sea Farms hatchery at Barcaldine on Thursday 9th February. If there is anyone who is not in this group but would like to learn what goes on there, please contact Linda Robb at the address at the bottom of the page, as she needs names before the 9th so badges can be made and number of tours required organised.

Poetry Group:

We are meeting on Monday 6th February at 2.00 p.m. to share poems on the subject of Night-time, Sleep and Dreams. Please let Joy know if you're able to come and do send in your poems/links by that date. The Anthology will be circulated shortly afterwards.



Reading Group 1:

We are due to meet on the 30th January to discuss "Lake Wobegon Days" by Garrison Keillor. We made this choice in the hopes of some laughs to get us through January. It remains to be seen if this is successful! February's choice was also made in the hopes of helping the winter go by with some humour - "Lost Continent" by Bill Bryson.

Reading Group 2 (Crime):

The group will meet on February 9th, 5 pm, at The Falls of Lora Hotel. The chosen book for February is 'Sleeping Murder', Book 4 in Agatha Christie's Miss Marple series.



Reading Group 3 (Fact & Fiction):

January's book was *Human Voices* by Penelope Fitzgerald: 'Damned with faint praise' might be the best way to describe this animated and thoroughly enjoyable discussion. When a book has "some nice sentences" you know you're struggling. However, it was a good observation of the times and the insular life at the BBC. It was a comedy of manners. Within the institution there was a bitter loyalty. Condemnation ranged from "it was a number of characters in search of a story" to "the author making light of the loathsome main characters had tainted the whole book". We were all relieved to know that everyone was confused by the acronyms, which begged the question 'how was this one of the best pieces of its time?' And the human voices? Some of us heard them, others wanted more actual broadcasting story.

The February meeting will discuss *Salt To The Sea* by Ruta Sepetys.

Science Group:

The Science Group will have two meetings in February in the Undercroft, Glencruitten Church Centre at 2pm on Wednesdays.

On the 15th Richard Bosworth will present a pair of talks on the 2022 Nobel Prizes: The Physics Prize which was for *experiments with entangled photons, the violation of Bell inequalities and quantum information science*. The Economics Prize was for *significantly improving the understanding of how society deals with financial crises*.

On the 22nd Dave Hughes will tell us about *The slimy green giant and the reef-building rarity: the wondrous worms of Scotland's sea lochs*. To most of us, worms are small things we only notice when digging the garden, but below the surface of Argyll's sea lochs our common earthworms have some **truly spectacular**, but little-known relatives. This talk will give an overview of over two decades of fieldwork in local waters, studying two very different species of marine worm. We will look at the main findings, the remaining mysteries, and finish with a question scientists rarely ask openly of their own research – was it worth doing?

Scottish History Group:

Scottish History meets on Tuesday 14 February at 14.30 in the library, when we will leave the Middle Ages, and Donald Snell will lead on The Act of Union.

Spanish Group:

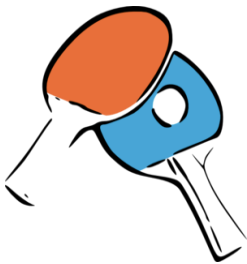
The Spanish group meets in the Lancaster Hotel at 11am on Wednesdays. We have some structured, prepared sections and we also try our best to have conversations. All levels of Spanish speakers, including beginners, are welcome.



Table Tennis Group:

We continue to meet in the Games Hall at Atlantis on Monday afternoons, at 2pm, playing singles and doubles depending on how many players we have. We would welcome players of any standard - particularly since one of us is off on a Very Special Holiday and we will therefore be an odd number!

Please note that there will be no T/T on Mon 6th Feb as they are laying on children's activities for the February break and previous experience has taught us to avoid such times.



Walk and Lunch Group:

There will be no further walks until March, due to unpredictability of winter weather.