



Oban u3a Newsletter

January 2024

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Chair's Remarks

Happy 2024 to all our members! We can congratulate ourselves on making it through another festive season!

How nice it is to settle into the year by resuming our u3a groups. Dust off those dictionaries and crochet needles; curl up on the sofa with that book; read the news to discuss at the Royal Hotel or the Church Centre; start to muse over what outings the year might bring and get rid of those mincemeat pounds at pickleball.

Enjoy your u3a year, everyone. Don't forget to tell your friends how much fun you're having in your third age.

Penny

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A note from the Editor

This month we are sending out the newsletter in a different way. Rather than using MailChimp, we are sending it as an attachment in personal messages with the assistance of an ingenious method devised by Richard Bosworth. Thanks Richard!

Please remember that any members can submit appropriate news to our newsletter by emailing obanu3anews@gmail.com Photographs are always welcome, especially of u3a activities. The deadline for sending news for the February issue is 31st January.

Happy New Year!

Bob



Calmac Slalom - Graham Cameron

National News

u3a National Poetry Competition

The u3a national poetry competition is back for its fourth year, and the judges are looking forward to seeing what talents members have to offer.

The theme for this year's competition is: **'What If'**.

The deadline for submission is 12pm on Friday 26 January 2024.

For more information and to enter: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/poetry-competition?highlight=WyJwb2V0cnkiXQ==>

u3a Online Across Scotland Talk

On **Thursday 4th January at 4pm** u3a Online Across Scotland is delighted to welcome Dr Bob Pullen who will give a talk on Zoom on ***The Secrets of the Human Brain***. In this talk Bob will start with a simple description of the structure of the brain and move onto inviting the audience to take part in an interactive section to test how left or right-handed they are. He will also get the audience to use their own brains to see things that are not really there and explain how men and women's brains are different.

More information and the zoom link are to be found here:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/onlineacrossscotland/events>

u3a Scotland Summer School 2024

u3a in Scotland Summer School is back for 2024. It will take place once more at Stirling Court Hotel, Stirling University. It will be held from the afternoon of Tuesday 20th August 2024 until lunchtime on Thursday 22nd August 2024.

Accommodation will be in either the hotel or in student accommodation at Willow Court. Members living within easy travel distance of Stirling may choose to be non-residential.

Courses and Seminars

Subject to demand they plan to run six courses. These are likely to include:

Creative Craft (Fabric Pictures); Drawing; Drug Discovery (Where our Medicines Come From); Play Writing (Creating Characters); Strolling to Admire Nature; Technology (Introduction to Programming with the BBCmicro:bit).

Participants choose one topic to study, in a group, for the two half-days and one full day of the Summer School.

There will also be optional talks/activities for the last session of Tuesday and Wednesday, all by and run by u3a members.

There will be a quiz on the Tuesday evening and entertainment on Wednesday evening.

It is now possible to book for this event. For those interested, further information, including synopses of courses, can be found here:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/scotland/page/79029>

We plan to start taking bookings in early January 2024. Some of the courses will involve an additional charge for materials/equipment.

Local News

Monthly meetings

Since the first Tuesday of January falls on a bank holiday the Monthly Meeting will be on **Tuesday January 9th** in the Studio Theatre, Corran Halls at 10:30.

Our Speaker for January 2024 is David Hughes who is a member of Oban U3A and worked at SAMS for many years. *Scientific voyages to the coasts and islands of New Guinea. Part 2: Misima Island to the mainland.*

In this talk he will complete the story of the SAMS 2007-08 research cruises, taking in some of the world's richest coral reefs, World War 2 relics, meeting the local inhabitants, and viewing a global crisis from the deck of a ship in the middle of nowhere.

Group News

Membership of u3a local groups

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

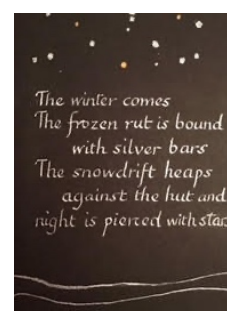
If you would like information on any group activity or to join a group please write to Obanu3a@gmail.com

Calligraphy Group

The Calligraphy group starts again on Thursday 11th January and fortnightly thereafter.

Craft Group

The Craft group are due to meet on the 18th January.



Creative Writing Group

The Creative Writing group, having taken a short festive break, will resume meetings on the 16th and 30th January 2024.

Thereafter resuming to normal fortnightly timetable.

There is still possibility for one or two more to join this quirky little group. No prior writing experience is required and sessions are non-judgemental, offering encouragement rather than criticism.

Discussion Group

The Discussion Group meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month, at 2.30 in The Royal Hotel. Discussions are animated and friendly; all are welcome. The next meeting will be on Thursday 4th January.

French Conversation Group

The Group meets at 14.00 hours every Friday afternoon in the Lancaster Hotel dining room (during term time) where we speak in French and enjoy a hot or cold drink together. We also read a book in French, the current one being *Les Victorieuses* by Laetitia Colombani. The group will return from the festive break on Friday 12th January, 2024. We meet at 2pm on Fridays in the Lancaster Hotel dining

room. For more information, please contact the Group Convener, Kathy Murgatroyd, either directly or through the email address at the foot of this newsletter.

Gardens & Wildflowers Group

After a successful afternoon of fruit pruning tips followed by hot drinks and goodies, we have a break until, hopefully, we have a good spell of weather in February. We'll meet then to consider the variety of lichens we have in this area, which includes patches of rich temperate rain forest.

Hoping to see you then, especially those who have recently expressed an interest in joining the group.



Shian Wood Rainforest - Bob Batty

Geology Group

We wish all our Geology group members a good New Year! We are still awaiting sufficient health improvement to enable our sessions to re-start. While it may be only a week or two, we don't want to give a re-start date until we are sure we can deliver. At the moment we are not forecasting a re-start in January, but if we find ourselves able to do so, we will give the group at least a week's notice of a re-start.

Meanwhile some of you may be interested in the recent major re-interpretation of the Dalradian given in a talk by Tony Prave of St Andrews University to the Glasgow Geological Society in November. The recording of the talk is available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/tnsw0mQu0zI>.



Cullipool - Zoe Fleming

German Group

The group continue to meet at Graham's house Thursdays 10:30 to 12:00. We are currently reading *Sturm auf Sylt* by André Klein, which is the twelfth in a series of ten books for German learners. Currently we are pressurising him to complete the thirteenth. Each week we watch a video on a topic of interest and come the next

week prepared to talk about that topic. The group continues to enjoy lively banter. Experience indicates that we have achieved a level of confidence daunting to absolute beginners, which has disappointed a couple of people. We are now cautious to point this out to potential newbies. It should be stressed however that our heightened confidence is not necessarily a sign of matching competence.

Mahjong Group

We have been delighted to welcome two new members, both of whom are doing well and enjoying it I think. We continue to meet in the Royal Hotel every Monday from 2-4ish. All welcome and you don't need to have had any previous experience. We will resume play on Monday 8th January.



A special hand Mahjong!



Out and About Group

The Out and About group will be enjoying an afternoon tea (probably at lunchtime) on Saturday 6th January in the Perle Hotel at 1:30 pm. The cost is £14 or £16.50 if you wish a glass of Prosecco with it. After that there will be nothing on until late February/March due to Linda being on holiday.

Pickleball Group

Our last Pickleball of 2023 was on Monday 11 December, with a good turnout of 12 pickleballers. We resume at 11: 00 on Monday 8 January, and weekly thereafter until Easter, except for 12 February when the sports centre is fully booked for kids' activities. We're all looking forward to another enjoyable term of energetic pickling!



Poetry Group

The Poetry Reading Group will meet at 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday 9th January '24 at Joy's house. There is no specific theme for this month so feel free to bring or send

for the Anthology a poem you love, in any form and on any topic, by that date. Please let Joy know if you're able to come to the meeting.

Post-war British Politics

This popular series of talks continues into January and February; titles to be announced but they will broadly cover the Blair/Cameron and Brexit years.

Please put the following reminders in your diary:

Tuesday 16th January and Tues 20th February 10:00-12:00 in The Studio at the Corran Halls.

A £2 contribution is requested towards room hire per session. No need to sign up just turn up on the day!

Reading Group 1

The group are due to meet again on 29th January to discuss *The Salt Path* by Raynor Winn.

We had a nice get-together in December to share food and discuss the *Keeper of Lost Things* by Ruth Hogan.

Reading Group 2: Crime

The next meeting will be on Thursday January 11th at 5 pm at 2 Mossbank, North Connel.

We are discussing *The Malice of Waves*, by Scottish writer Mark Douglas-Home.

Reading Group 3: Fact & Fiction

Last month the group read *Rose Nicolson* by Andrew Greig

This book as an accurate telling of a time when Scotland gained its identity. A nation's history informs the characteristic of its people. The scourge of the Reformation in the 16th century led to a time of renaissance and freedom. New Scotland had a reformed Presbyterian Scottish church led by the Kirk and Universities rather than King or Pope. Bishops were replaced by local presbyteries. Literacy and disputation became characteristics of the secular identity of Scottish life as able men were encouraged to go to university. Melville reformed schools making them for all, girls and boys. And so a fisher girl like Rose Nicolson was able to learn Latin, become educated and gain the freedom of spirit that charmed Will Fowler.

The use of Scots language enhanced the richness of the narrative, The book was a dense read portraying a convoluted period in Scottish history and it was felt that the book deserved a second reading. The title *Rose Nicolson* was a little surprising until you realised that Will Fowler's life was defined by her. His passion for her as an independent spirit was heartfelt.

Andrew Greig is a good writer whom we all admired and the author's depth of research is evident throughout the novel.

Science Group

We meet in the Undercroft, Glencruitten Church Centre at 14:00.

Everyone welcome.

Meetings will resume on Wednesday 10th January with: *The Ig Nobel Prizes 2023 (part one)*

Followed by *part two* on the 24th.

We will discuss these awards that "honour achievements that first make people laugh, and then make them think. The prizes are intended to celebrate the unusual, honour the imaginative — and spur people's interest in science, medicine, and technology."



The Stinker: Official Mascot of the Ig Nobel Prizes

Scottish History Group



Scottish History starts again on Tuesday 09 January at 14.30 in the library. We'll spend the next sessions looking at various sources for the same incident. The first will be: 'Who won the Battle of Largs, 1263?' And 'who says so?' A round-table discussion is intended, so come ready to get into character and fight it out (verbally).

*The Battle of Largs.
Part of the mural by
William Hole in the
Scottish National
Portrait Gallery*

Spanish Group

El grupo Español tuvo un año muy productivo y agradable, reuniéndose en el Hotel Lancaster todos los miércoles durante una hora y media, en la que intentamos hablar y escuchar tanto español como sea posible. Nos hemos beneficiado de la incorporación de nuevos miembros que se adaptó rápidamente a la forma en que trabajamos: una serie de rondas para fomentar la máxima participación. Ha sido un placer para mí dirigir el grupo y me gustaría tomar prestada una frase latina que usan los peregrinos y aplicarla al año nuevo: 'Ultreya', que significa "avanzar con valentía".

The Spanish group had a very productive and enjoyable year, meeting at the Lancaster Hotel every Wednesday for an hour and a half in which we try to speak

and listen to as much Spanish as possible. We have benefited from the addition of new members who have quickly settled-in to the way we work: a series of rounds to encourage maximum participation. It has been a pleasure for me to run the group and I'd like to borrow a Latin phrase that is used by pilgrims and apply it to the new year: 'Ultreya', which means 'go forward boldly'.

Table Tennis Group

Table tennis has continued on its merry way this autumn, in spite of quite a lot of absences through beastly viruses of one sort or another. Our last session of the year will be on Monday 11th December and we plan to restart on Monday 8th January - usual time and place: main hall of Atlantis at 2pm on Mondays. All welcome - make a New Year resolution to take up some light hearted but energetic sport and join us!

Walk & Lunch Group

We are going to meet at Taynuilt railway station at 11am on Wednesday 31 January 2024. The walk is gentle up and down and muddy. We are going to have lunch at the Sìtheag, Inverawe. There is a footbridge which might be wobbly depending on how many people come, see: photo



Inverawe - Liz Eaton

To contact Oban u3a or find out about group activities email: obanu3a@gmail.com



Ganavan - Bob Batty