



Oban u3a Newsletter September 2023

Chair's remarks

We have our AGM on Tuesday 5 September and this date will also be the 15th anniversary of Oban u3a. This is a reason to celebrate, not only is our u3a continuing to thrive but we have also enjoyed a full year largely free from the restrictions of the Covid pandemic. Our activities have all resumed, with renewed vigour. Our membership, and the number and variety of interest groups, continues to grow. I am sure that this is due to the enthusiasm of all members of Oban u3a.

We have a number of new committee members who bring lots of new ideas and have refreshed those of us who have served for some time! New groups, Pickleball and Politics are starting this autumn. Lots to look forward to in the coming year.

Bob Batty
Chairman Oban u3a
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National news

u3a Week - 16-24 September

We hope to celebrate u3a week with a 'stroll-with-interest' and a cuppa, probably on the afternoon of Wednesday 20 September. Arrangements have not yet been confirmed, so details will follow as soon as possible.

For information on the many online talks, go to the [u3a Week](#) page on the national website. These include Carl Honoré, award winning writer, broadcaster and activist on ageing, who will challenge us to embrace ageing as an adventure, and John Tucker from the Woodland Trust.

u3a: Online Across Scotland (OAS)

OAS is a u3a aimed at those u3a members who are unable or unwilling to attend u3a groups and meetings in person because they have no u3a locally, or their u3a does not run groups for a subject they wish to study, and for those members who have disability, illness or caring responsibilities. OAS has an exciting programme of talks planned to which all u3a members in Scotland are invited. These will be held on the first Thursday of each month at 16:00.

The first talk will be on Thursday 7 September by Christine De Luca, Edinburgh Makar 2014-2017, who will present a selection of serious and light hearted poetry in English and in Shaetlan (Shetlandic) her mother tongue. Further details can be viewed at <https://u3asites.org.uk/onlineacrossscotland/events>

Take a look also at the groups on offer through OAS. These are being constantly added to as more groups and short courses come on line, such as Scottish Writers, Gaelic and Spanish.



Local news

Monthly meetings

Our Open Morning and AGM will be held on Tuesday 5th September in the Corran Halls from 10:30; the AGM will start at 11:00. This year we are celebrating our 15th anniversary, so we will enjoy a celebratory cake after the business is concluded.

Talks will resume on 3 October, with Chris Adie giving a presentation, *Adventures in Brazil*, on his travels earlier this year.

New groups

We're delighted to announce two new interest groups:

Once again, we will be able to enjoy the expertise of Donald Shell, who will present a short series of three discussions on **Post War British Politics**. Please see details below in the groups section below.

Pickleball will start on 11 September. No experience is necessary. Please see details in the groups section below.

We have had an enquiry about running a **Latin** group. If you'd be interested in brushing up on your classics in an informal way, please email the address at the foot of this newsletter.



Group news

Membership of u3a local groups

Please remember that, for insurance reasons, you cannot join the activities of a u3agroup 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.



Calligraphy group

We are planning a new session starting in October. Last spring, the group learned how to write the Foundation alphabet, and for our new session in the autumn we will move on to the Uncial alphabet, which is very old and lends itself to Celtic decoration, so lots of scope for being creative. Anyone is welcome, and complete beginners will be advised at the first session on what you need by way of pens and paper. If you can't come to the open morning/AGM and sign up for the class then, just email Gill Moore (group leader) via the address at the foot of this newsletter, or through the website.

Craft group

Four of the group spent some time last week visiting Mid Argyll to see some of the artwork in the various 'open studios'. One member did quite a comprehensive tour of studios in the Tarbert, Lochgilphead and Crinan area. On Wednesday three of us went particularly to visit Louise Oppenheimer, the tapestry weaver, situated near Dunadd, Kilmichael Glassary. We also looked at

the art work on show in the Kilmelford Hotel and on the way back called in to see Mogs Mellor at Knipoch. All these visits were so interesting and it was great to meet the artists.

We also had our monthly get-together on Thursday 24 August. Our next meeting is on Thursday 28 September.

Creative writing group

The creative writing group has room for new members. We are looking for people who want to write just for the love of it. We offer support, construction suggestions, interesting conversation, and good strong coffee along with an abundance of cakes. We meet the second & fourth Tuesday of the month on the Isle of Kerrera, which is only a short ferry ride away. Pickup at the slip for those who do not want to walk (which is everyone) off the 12:30 ferry. Bring lunch, relax and let your inner author come out. Five prompts are sent to you each month to use, or not, in the writing of your pieces. They can be fiction, non fiction, memories, poems. Whatever you want to write about. We also try to learn about the technical side of writing each month hopefully, in a fun way. This month we are writing a very short piece using idioms. Not over used phrases or cliché. We put a dozen or so idioms in a hat and picked out one to write about such as "jump on the band wagon". Not as easy you may think. Please come and join our quirky group.

Discussion group

The group meets at 14:30 on the first and third Thursday of the month in the Royal Hotel. September dates are 7th and 21st. Discussions are usually on topical subjects, quite often politics. Everyone is welcome and any conflicting views just add to the enjoyment of getting together and putting the world to rights.

French conversation group

The group meets at 14:00 every Friday afternoon during school term time in the Lancaster Hotel. We have now reconvened after the summer break. We speak in French and enjoy a hot or cold drink together. We will also be reading a book and are in the process of choosing a new one, so now would be a good time for new members, who speak French at intermediate or advanced level, to join us. For more information please contact group leader Kathy Murgatroyd directly or through the email address at the foot of this newsletter.

Gardens and wildflowers group

After a very successful visit to Kilchoan (Argyll) Gardens, we are considering a visit to the National Trust for Scotland Crarae Garden in September.

Members will receive an email regarding this potential visit nearer the time.



Geology group

This year we hope to run two separate series of sessions, both series at 13:45 to 16:00 on Tuesday afternoons, in the Ambo Room, Glencruitten Church Centre:

- a repeat of our *Introduction to Geology* series (especially for those new to geology),
- our continuation of our *Life Story* series.

The dates until Christmas below are provisional, and liable to change if circumstances change, but we will try our best to keep to them.

Introduction to Geology

A welcome to all, whether old hands from the past 15 years of the group wishing to refresh their basics, to new members who have never looked carefully at a rock before. We are updating the original sessions, as the pace of research in the earth sciences is as fast as that in medical sciences and cosmology.

19 September: Introduction to Rocks

10 October: Rock Cycle

7 November: Plate Tectonics

21 November: Origin of our Atmosphere

Life Story

So far we have 'covered' 3 billion years of the story of life, from the origin of life (still a matter of intense research) through LUCA (Last Universal Common Ancestor), the 'boring billion' (not so boring) and the trials of Snowball Earth. In an initial revisit of the last two as a result of new research, in which we will meet - in theory - LECA (Last Eukaryotic Common Ancestor), we will be in a position to meet the first period in which we really do now have a substantial fossil record - the Ediacaran.

26 September: Dawn of Animals
24 October: Ediacaran Wonderland
14 November: Cambrian Explosion
28 November: The Lower Palaeozoic

We will continue to send out meeting reminders the weekend before (if someone reminds us to do so!).

German group

German meets at 10:30 to 12:00 on Thursdays and restarts on 5 October at Graham's house: Lisieux, Rockfield Road, Oban, PA34 5DQ. We are reading book 11 of the *German with Stories* books - *Lockdown in Liechtenstein*, and are about to read chapter 9 - *Geistige Spatziergänge*. After that we go on to book 12 - *Sturm auf Sylt*.

Mahjong group

We love our mahjong, but perhaps we are not quite as dedicated as these people!



All welcome to join us at the Royal Hotel, 14:00 on Mondays. Come and see what it is all about. Join in or just watch to see if you think you might like it.

Out and about group

The group has two outings in September:

1. A visit to the recently re-opened and extended Kilmartin Museum on the 9th or 10th.
2. Bus to Glasgow to see Matthew Bourne's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* on 28 September.

If anyone is interested please contact Linda Robb directly or through the email address at the end of this newsletter.



Pickleball group

Pickleball is a cross between tennis, badminton and table tennis, and can be played by all ages. It's played on a badminton court, but with a much lower net. The rules are easy to learn, and it's increasingly popular in the UK. We plan to start an Oban u3a Pickleball group, to run alongside the existing table tennis group, in the Atlantis sports centre from 14:00 to 15:00 on Monday afternoons. Equipment (bats and balls) will be supplied. If you're interested, sign up at the AGM or email to the address at the foot of this newsletter!

Poetry group

The group will meet at 14:00 on Tuesday 12 September at Joy's house (for details please contact Joy directly or through the email address at the foot of this newsletter).

The theme for September is *Friends, Family and Brief Encounters*. Please let Joy know if you can come, if you haven't already done so; also do send in/bring with you poems for the anthology, which will be sent out shortly afterwards.

Post war British politics

Donald Shell will initially run three discussions in the Studio at the Corran Halls at 10:00 on Tuesdays (n.b. the talk will start at 10:00, with coffee available during the break).

19 September: Building new Jerusalem: Britain's New Deal (1940s and 1950s)

17 October: Winds of Change and British Decline (1960s and 1970s)

21 November: Thatcher and her long shadow (1980s and 1990s)

A further two sessions may run in the new year with dates to follow:

Plodding on with modernisation (Blair to Cameron)

BREXIT, Turmoil and Possible Futures

There will be a charge of £2 per session to cover hall hire. Drinks will be available to purchase during the break.

Reading group 1

The group discussed *The Marriage Portrait* by Maggie O'Farrell in August. This was the group's fifth book by this author, the first being *The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox*, which they read in 2010 and was enjoyed by all, as far as they remember!

On 28 September the group will discuss *The People of the Book* by Geraldine Brooks, set in Sarajevo.

Reading group 2 (crime)

The crime book group will meet at 17:00 on Thursday 14 September at The Falls of Lora Hotel. The book chosen for this month is *Thunder Bay* by Scottish author Douglas Skelton.

Reading group 3 (fact & fiction)

The group will meet at 14:00 on 21 September, when it will discuss *The Garden of Evening Mists* by Tan Twan Eng.

Science group

We will start meeting again at 14:00 on Wednesday 27 September in the Undercroft, Glencruitten Church Centre, when we will consider *Are We What We Eat?* There is a lot of advice out there but what is the real science - if any? Can we lose weight, be healthier, live longer? And still enjoy food.



Scottish history group

The group is taking a break until January. When it returns, the opening session will be: *Who won the Battle of Largs in 1263?*

We'll be looking at varying accounts and at some of the ways in which different texts are used.

Spanish group

Anyone looking for a new linguistic challenge at any level, or just good company, is welcome to join us in The Lancaster Hotel at 11:00 every Wednesday.

Table tennis group

Now that Atlantis Leisure has quietened down after a summer full of sports camps enjoyed - at full volume - by all the small athletes, we intend to start playing at 14:00 on Monday 4 September in the main games hall. The charge per session will be £2, payable to the convener - so just walk past Reception and come on in. We welcome newcomers of any standard, particularly since two of us may have to face relegation/umpire duties/after-match debriefing at the café owing to back problems. Do think about it - it really is a lot of fun.

Walk and lunch group

Ten of us enjoyed our August walk along Cuan Shore to the Fairy Cave. And although we insist that we are not "away with the fairies" yet, this did inspire the choice of the September walk.

That will take place on Tuesday 12 September. It will be The Fairy Bridge walk, Glen Creran, followed by lunch at the Creagan Inn. This walk has been closed for a period because a wooden bridge had to be replaced. It has now been replaced and open again. Hurray!

We will meet at 10:30 at the car park at Elleric (PA38 4BJ). The walk is on forest trails with gentle slopes for approximately 4km. If you would like to go on this walk and are not yet a member of the Walk and Lunch Group please email the address at the foot of this newsletter.

