



Thanks, as ever, to Dot Dahl for this wonderful photo of a carder bee on comfrey. Dot contributes the majority of our newsletter photos and they are always stunning. If you have a photo you'd like to be share, of our locality or somewhere else, please do send it to obanu3anews@gmail.com. Many thanks.

Bob is away at the moment. We hope he has a more relaxing holiday than last time.

May, that month when Argyll is arguably at its best, is with us. Gardens are beginning to show their colour, leaves are bursting forth and green is all around. Hopefully you've been able to enjoy the sunshine, even if we're all still wrapping up a bit.

Some of our groups are taking a break for summer and some will keep going. I'm sure there will be many lovely walks through gardens and glens together and, perhaps, new u3a friendships made during the summer months.

Whatever activity you take part in this month, even if it's just reading through this newsletter, have fun!

Penny (newsletter editor/vice chair)

NATIONAL NEWS

Consensus Statement on an Older People's Commissioner for Scotland

You may be aware that the Scottish Government has not appointed a Commissioner for Older people.

Below is a message that the u3a Trust has prepared, which you may wish to copy and send to your MSP:

We call on the Scottish Government to establish an Older People's Commissioner for Scotland to act as an independent champion for older people and ensure that policy and practice across government considers the long-term needs of people in later life.

Our society is ageing, and policymakers should embrace this demographic shift. Currently in Scotland, over 1 million people are aged 65 or over. By 2030, 1 in 5 people in Scotland will be over 65. Growing older is a privilege, but an ageing population will require collaboration and joined-up thinking to deliver innovative policy solutions and meet the needs of the future.

The support people need in later life from institutions like the NHS, social care and social security systems are critical, but no single government department can respond to these issues alone. A commissioner would facilitate the long-term planning that is needed to ensure our economy and public services are adapting to demographic shifts, while also enabling more people to age well. This would not just benefit older people, but the nation as a whole.

A sharper focus on the range of experiences in later life is required. Not everyone enjoys a financially secure retirement - indeed an alarming proportion are struggling to make ends meet - and too often, older people's rights and interests are forgotten by decision-makers, particularly as we face unprecedented crises.

But there is an opportunity to fix this. Older people want to be part of the nation's vision, now, and in the future. As our older population becomes increasingly diverse, we believe that older people urgently need a champion to help make Scotland the best place in the world to grow old.

LOCAL NEWS

May talk:

Tuesday 2 May 2023; 10:30 coffee, 11:00 talk; Corran Halls.

“Rewilding and Landscape Change in the Highlands”

James Fenton, Trustee, The National Trust for Scotland

The current approach to rewilding in the Highlands is causing major landscape change through the encouragement of trees. The talk will discuss whether this approach is appropriate, and whether the Highlands need rewilding at all.

June talk:

“The Book of Kells”

Rosemary Power

(further information in June newsletter)

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 .

Calligraphy Group:

The group is taking a break over the summer. It will be offered again at the u3a's September meeting, when existing group members and new people can sign up for the coming autumn and winter.

Craft Group:

The Craft group meets together monthly 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:

The group usually meets on Kerrera, twice a month on Tuesdays, in Sue's charming wee cottage, with sheep grazing all around, and the ever-present smell of the sea, wafting in on a slight breeze, through the back door. After coffee, tea and sumptuous home baking we get down to business. From this idyllic setting, if we allow ourselves, we can be transported to other times and places, through the power of sensory imagery by means of the written word, into the memories of another's childhood, witness the mysterious happenings on an old sailing vessel, be present at real or imagined historical events, sympathise or even empathise in relation to affairs of the heart and indeed, of the conscience.... If you would like to experience any of this contact Sue Rimmer, the group convener, on the address at the bottom of the page. The next meetings are on 9 and 23 May.



Discussion Group:

We will meet in the Royal Hotel at 2.30pm on Thursday 4 and 18 May. All welcome.

French Conversation Group:

The French Conversation Group meets weekly at 2pm on Fridays 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 Convenor, on the email at the bottom of the page.



Gardens and Wild Flowers Group:

Visit to Arduaine Garden, Monday 15th May at 1 45 pm, cost £6.50.

Visit to Glasdrum National Nature Reserve, Monday 22nd May at 2 pm.

Both of these visits are weather dependent, and so it is important for group members to keep an eye on email communications.

Plans are underway to visit a garden new to the group, open through the Scottish Gardens Scheme, in June. It lies between Ford and Dalmally.



Gardens and Wild Flowers group enjoying Angus Garden



German Group:

German group membership has stabilised at nine people, and continues to be entertaining. It meets on Thursdays, 10:00 at Graham's house, and coffee is provided. The last meeting this session will be on 4 May, and the group will reconvene on 7 September.

Mahjong Group:

To avoid clashing with the Garden and Wild Flowers' outings, which are also on a Monday, we have decided to change our meeting time. We will still play on a Monday but in the morning at 10.15am in the Royal Hotel. We expect to meet all through the summer months and as always are happy to welcome new members.



Out and About Group:

The May trip to Glasgow to see the Mousetrap is fully booked.

Poetry Group:

Eight of us met to read our poems on Magic, Mystery and Myth in April. Thanks to everyone who came and to those of you who sent in poems for the Anthology. We agreed to meet next on Tuesday 9th May at 2pm and to take 'May' as our theme. Of course this may be interpreted as you wish!

Joy would be grateful if you could let her know if you can come on 9th and, of course, looks forward to your poetry choices, whether you're attending in person or not.

Reading Group 1:

We decided to put aside our prejudices and read a Jeffrey Archer, *Kane and Abel*, which has sold 34 million copies! Everyone managed to read it and with a certain amount of enjoyment, as it is a fairly fast moving story. However, one member felt there were definitely instances of plagiarism and, on reflection, the section set in a Siberian prison camp was very reminiscent of *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Solzhenitsyn, though not so well written. Another member felt one of his later books was a carbon copy of *Kane and Abel* with names and location changed!



Reading Group 2 (Crime):

The next meeting is at 5pm on Thursday 11 May at The Falls of Lora Hotel, Connel. The book is *Death at la Fenice* by Donna Leon.

Reading Group 3 (Fact & Fiction):

The Book of Form and Emptiness by Ruth Ozeki: Although a challenging read, most members thought it was an excellent book and empathised with the main characters, who were likeable and relatable. Themes covered almost all of the issues arising today in contemporary western society: death and bereavement, mental health, urban poverty, unemployment, racism, adolescence, bullying, loneliness, ageism, homelessness, social isolation, drugs and addiction, plus the horrors experienced when dealing with the rigidity of authority within inflexible bureaucratic systems. The story was original and the narration switching from Benny to Book and back was seamless.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 18 May, when we will discuss *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus.

Science Group:

The Science Group is taking a summer break and will meet again in the autumn. If you have any thoughts on the programme, or a talk to offer, please get in touch.

Scottish History Group:

Scottish History group is taking a May break, but will be back in June.

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.

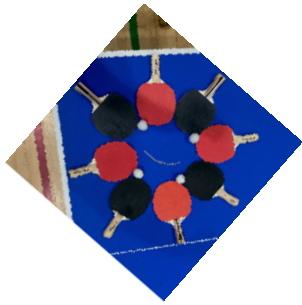


Table Tennis Group:

The table tennis group continues to meet in the main hall at Atlantis, from 2-3pm on Mondays, followed by tea/coffee - one member requires cake after his exertions! - and a chat before the school children sweep in. Players of any experience, or none, are very welcome. Equipment is provided and we each pay £2.50 per session.

Walk and Lunch Group:

No plans for May yet.



Greater Stitchwort. Dot Dahl.