

## SEPTEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER



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### A note from the Editor

As you may know, I took on the editor role when I responded to Penny's plea for an editorial volunteer at the "Basking Sharks" talk back in March. I attended Shane's talk partly because we know the Wasik family, and partly because we have been engaged in the process of relocating to Oban, having been members of Congleton U3A and having founded the Recorder Group there.

To produce the Newsletter I need to use our desktop Mac (still in Congleton). Unfortunately, I needed to be in Oban at just the point the August newsletter needed to be worked upon, so please forgive the production hiccup which scuppered an August issue.

Finally, although I cannot be there myself, can I urge you to attend the **Open Morning and AGM on 2 September**? The Open Morning will have displays by all groups - it's an opportunity to research additional groups to join - and to investigate our two new groups - on **Astronomy** and on **Drama**. It's also vital we have a quorate AGM and that the Committee feels it has your support.

### Chair's Remarks

It isn't Hogmanay but it's a new year for Oban u3a.

Do please come along to the open morning next Tuesday. You will have the opportunity to chat to all the group convenors and see if there are any additional interest groups that take your fancy. New for 2025-26 are Astronomy and Drama, with more possibilities being discussed; or you might want to see if you'd

like to play pickleball or table tennis; reading groups have spaces and there are so many more activities which you might enjoy trying.

At our AGM, which follows the open morning, several changes will be made to your committee. The Chair, Groups Convenor and Speakers Coordinator are standing down, making way for new blood and new ideas. I'd like to thank Sue Pollard for standing for the role of Interim Chair. It's not too late for you to volunteer to join our committee! Please do get in touch if you are interested.

Being on the u3a committee for the last three years has enabled me to understand better how the u3a movement works locally and throughout the UK. I have learned a lot, just like in any of our groups, and I have had the privilege of working with some very interesting people. My thanks go to all the committee members and other volunteers who have worked alongside me to keep Oban u3a thriving. In the last two years, membership has gone from just over 100 to over 180. I wish the new committee and the whole group much continued success.

Penny  
obanu3achair@gmail.com

### **Welcome to New Members**

A very warm welcome to Catherine, Peter, Toril, and Donald.

**Oban U3A Group Reports** (click the Group's name to go to its webpage)

### **[Art visits](#)**

In August, members are attending various exhibitions at artists' studios, including the Artmap Opening Evening at The Rockfield, Louise Oppenheimer's studio at Kilmichael Glassary and various studios/exhibitions in Tayvallich, Airds Bay, Taynuilt & Oban.

Some of us have been/will be lucky enough to be in Edinburgh while the Andy Goldsworthy 50 year retrospective exhibition is on (at the RSA until Sun 2nd Nov '25), though a formal visit was not arranged.

If you have ideas for visits during the Autumn, please let Joy know. A couple of possibilities:

- Argyll Hope Spot HOLDFAST Exhibition, Kilmartin Museum 1/9 - 14/12
- Life With Water | Society of Scottish Artists, An Tobar, Tobermory until 24/10



### [Astronomy](#)

This informal group will focus how, where and what to observe in the night sky around Oban. We will talk about equipment choices, preparation and setup, mobile apps, and star charts as we explore navigating the night skies. The picture shows the Transit of Venus across the sun on 15 June 2012: to realise that the small dot is actually a planet moving in front of the sun, and to see the sheer scale of the sun to that planet, just takes your breath away - one of the inspirations for our Convenor's enthusiasm.

### [Bridge Group](#)

The new players within the relaxed Bridge Group are coming on apace. Three of them have now dipped their toes (hands?) into the local Bridge Club with respectable results. We will be continuing to learn for a bit longer but anyone of any ability is welcome to join us. Please let Sue know if you wish to come along.

### [Creative Writing Group](#)

The group will meet on the mainland from September. Details of future plans will be available at the Open Morning on 2nd, or shortly thereafter on the webpage.

### [Discussion Group](#)

There's no update this month. Please see details of meetings on the website.

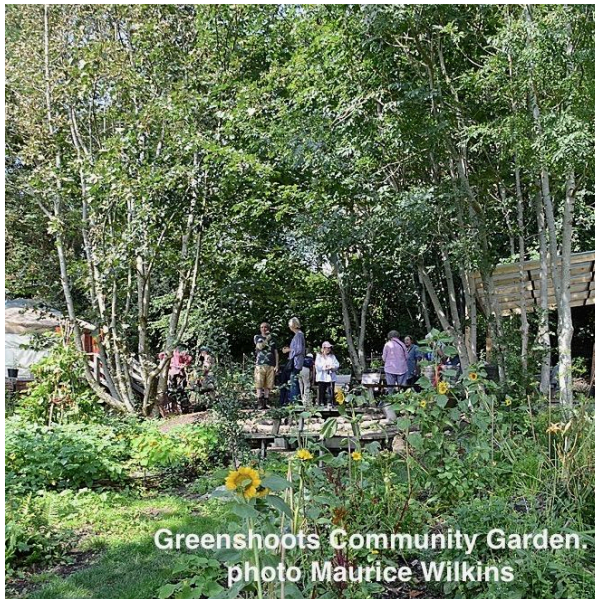
### [Drama](#)

Time and location for this new group will be decided after consultation with prospective members - meanwhile, if interested, please do email Linda through the webpage or we'll be at the AGM / Open Morning at the Corran Halls on 2nd.

### [French Conversation Group](#)

The French Conversation Group meets every Friday afternoon, during school term time, at present in the Lancaster Hotel dining room. We are a friendly, supportive group, and welcome new members of intermediate or above French conversation standard. Over a cup of coffee, tea or hot chocolate we put the world to rights in French and usually discuss a French book together. Please

contact Kathy or Anne-Marie, either at the monthly coffee morning, the AGM, or via the Oban u3a website.



### [Gardens and Wildflower Group](#)

Following a successful autumn visit last year when there were prolific fungi, the intention is to visit Ardkinglas where there are very pleasant woods to enjoy. An email regarding this visit will be sent to group members nearer the time. The intended date is Monday 15th September, but that may change depending on the weather forecast.

The photo shows Greenshoots Community Garden at Dunollie. 16 of us visited in very warm weather, which encouraged a number of different butterflies to enjoy the many colourful blooms. The group was made very welcome indeed by John Pettit. Everyone is welcome to pop in when the garden is open - usually Tuesday to Thursday, and some Fridays, from 10 am till 4 pm. The entrance is adjacent to the main drive to the big house. Volunteers to help with the garden are particularly welcome!



### [Geology Group](#)

Our first meeting is on Tuesday 9 September, 13.45-15.45, in the Corran Halls as usual. This meeting will continue the Introductory theme, and this month it is all about Earth movements, and that means **Folds, Faults and Earthquakes**. We will of course meet the fault pictured, but there is a much older and grander one much closer to home!

The next episode in Life Story will be on 7<sup>th</sup> October.

### [German Group](#)

German is paused. It is hoped to restart in October.

### [Mahjong Group](#)

The Mahjong group has continued to meet over the summer and were pleased to welcome new members. You can find us at the Royal Hotel from 2-4pm every Monday. Come and try it or just watch to see what it is all about. It's fun!

### [Out and About Group](#)

We are planning to visit the Tutankhamun Exhibition in Glasgow on 18th September.

Downton Abbey fans - watch this space! The final film is released on 12 Sept and we'll be looking for a suitable date for a trip to Fort William to see it..

### [Pickleball - Competitive Group](#)

The group meets on Friday mornings from 09:30 to 10:00 at Atlantis Leisure, where three courts are available for up to 12 players. We are always striving to improve our pickleball skills through competitive play. We have kept going through the summer, though holidays and "grandparent duty" sometimes limits the number of participants. It will be full steam ahead from September onwards!

### [Pickleball - Recreational Group](#)

There's no update this month. Please see details of meetings on the website.

### [Jane Austen Short Course](#)

We continue to enjoy her work, with her last novel, *Persuasion* being the 17 September choice. 4pm in the home of Joy Sullivan. Future sessions will revert to Thursdays at 4pm, and we'll look at the unfinished novels, her small works, and letters. Contact the convenor, Rosemary Power, if interested.

### [Poetry Reading Group](#)

To keep us from having withdrawal symptoms, Maurice has, kindly, kept us supplied with poems over the summer by putting together two extra anthologies - thank you very much!

The group meets on Tuesday 2nd September at 2.30 p.m., on the same day as the Open Morning and AGM. For that reason, we'll start at the slightly later time of 2.30 p.m. Please let Joy know if you can come and send Maurice your poems for the Anthology: the theme is Pictures.

### [Reading Group 1 - General](#)

This month we are reading *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks. We are still to discuss it but I think it will have met with approval.

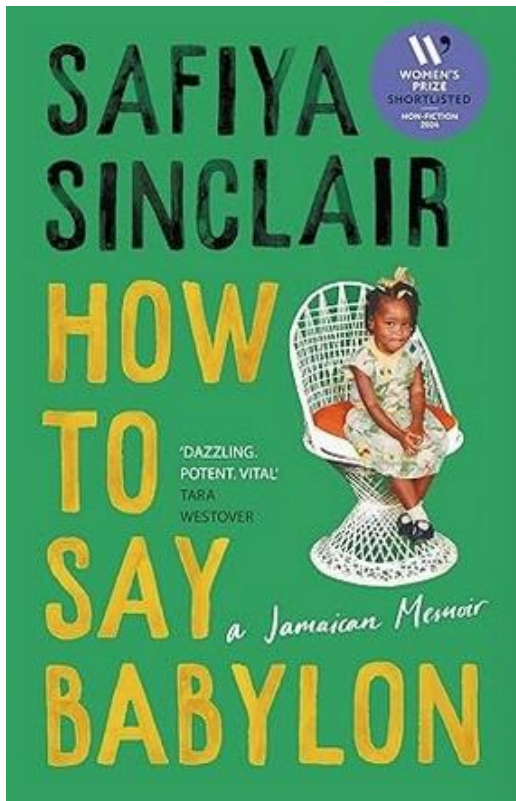
We also read, some time ago, *Year of Wonders* by the same author about the village in Derbyshire which suffered from an outbreak of the bubonic plague and went into voluntary isolation (lockdown!) It was fiction based on fact (as is *Horse*) and much appreciated.

### [Reading Group 2 - Crime](#)

We meet at 5 pm, on Thurs 11th Sept at The Falls of Lora Hotel, Connel, to discuss *Gaudy Night* by Dorothy L Sayers (1936).

### [Reading Group 3 - Fact and Fiction](#)

We had an excellent discussion around Safiya Sinclair's *How to Say Babylon* (2023) - an autobiographical memoir about growing up in Jamaica in the 1990s within a strict Rastafarian household. The book covers topics ranging through female roles and oppression, domestic violence, child abuse, nature versus nurture, Rastafarian beliefs and customs, survival in the face of harsh odds, relationships within families, ordinary Jamaican lives in the 'White' world and, most powerfully, the wonders of language, words, poetry and self-expression.



We all agreed that Safiya Sinclair's writing was extraordinarily compelling, beautifully crafted, original, engaging and thoroughly authentic. However, there were a few questions raised as to the issues of memory and recall. We discussed this in the light of the current climate of challenging 'Truth' and acknowledged that Safiya's story is her own, it is *her* memoir.

The narrative describes Jamaica and the life of Safiya and her three siblings as they grow up under the tyrannical eye of her father, Djani. Her mother, Esther, is the stalwart of the household, the homemaker, who nurtures her children's education from the start and whose intelligence and determination supports her first-born daughter in her drive to learn, and particularly, to write poetry.

Whilst we thought the actual writing was superb we found the content raised many difficult issues. It's not an easy or soothing read - harsh, cruel, a punch in the guts. However, this extraordinary young woman survives and finds her freedom and her voice, thanks to innate intelligence and unflinching tenacity.

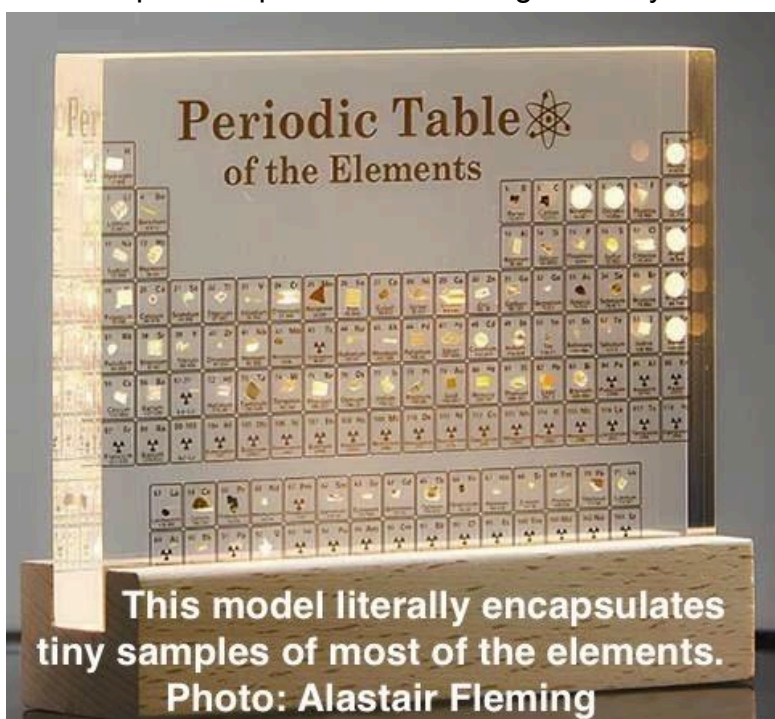
### Reading Group 4

Our next meeting will be at the Convenor's house at 2pm on Thursday, 28th August. By agreement, we held a moratorium on meeting in July, in order to have a summer break. For that reason we decided to read two very different books for that period. These were *Cold Comfort Farm*, by Stella Gibbons, and *Lady in Waiting*, an autobiography by Anne Glenconner - both light and summery reading, but also quite unlike each other. This should make for a lively conversation when we meet later!

We still have some places for others to join our Group 4, so if your taste in books is for a wide variety of subjects, come and join us in our monthly meetings and enjoy the fun of our relaxing but focused discussions.

### Science and Technology Group

The Group will reconvene after the summer break with a presentation by Alistair Fleming on 24<sup>th</sup> September at 2:15pm in the Studio Theatre, Corran Halls entitled ***The story of the Periodic Table***. Despite origins dating back over 10,000 years, and with major breakthroughs in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, a very recent puzzle shows how much we still have to learn – that is the story of the fundamental basis of our material world, the world of the elements. This talk will attempt the impossible – covering the story in one hour!



We have an exciting programme of meetings planned for the rest of the autumn and winter covering all the major science disciplines. However, we welcome any new ideas and suggestions for presentations, either from yourself or someone else (contact Bob or Ray).

Please note that all our meetings are aimed at a mixed audience with content accessible to all. So, you really do not need to have any prior scientific knowledge or experience to join us.

### [Scottish History Group](#)

We will reconvene in January. Second Tuesday of the month at 2pm in the library.

### [El Grupo Español](#)

Como ya lo sabeis, el grupo Espanol no tiene una vacacion. Como el famoso Windmill Theatre, estamos abierto todo el ano y nunca estamos cerradas. Ahora, que estamos en septiembre podemos esperar unos nuevos socios. Como siempre, tengo confianza que ellos seran bienvenidos.

### [Table Tennis Group](#)

The Table Tennis Group has had a break during the school summer holidays and is now back playing at 2.00pm on Monday afternoons at Atlantis Leisure. The charge per session is £2.50. We are a happy group and welcome all new members, no matter at what level of play. If you would like to join us for some fun and light exercise please come along and give Table Tennis a try.

### [Ukelele Fun and Sing-a-Long Group](#)

How about joining us as we sing and play our ukuleles? We've had an enjoyable first year but we would like new members and hope you'll come along and be part of our friendly and welcoming group.

No ukulele? Members have kindly offered to bring along ukuleles to get you started and tuition is at hand. It'd be good to see you - Tuesday evenings, 7 till 9 - Congregational Church, Tweedale Street (just up from Chalmers shop. Enter street level, middle door.)

### [Walk and Lunch Group](#)

There's no update this month. Please see details of meetings on the website.

**SCAMS - Third Age Trust warns us to beware of unexpected emails, especially those that ask you to click on links or download attachments. They warn of scam emails currently from the [English] Charity Commission. Further guidance is available on the [ActionFraud](#) website.**

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