

APRIL 2026 NEWSLETTER



Mull from Cullipool. Photo: Zoe Fleming

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Chair's Remarks

It was great to welcome a number of relatively new members for coffee and a chat recently. Please do make an effort to mingle with our “Newbies” (with a red dot on their name badge) as it is often very difficult to come to an event where everyone else seems to know each other.

With more members, we need more groups. A number of ideas have been floated but we would love to hear your ideas. Would anyone like to join a new Crime Reading Group? A number of folk would like to do some “real” walking – does this interest you? Or would you rather join a much easier walking group? How about photography or crafts? Do let [David H](#) know of your ideas so he can help them come to fruition. If we have a number of people interested, we will meet up to discuss the way forward. Remember, in our u3a, convenors do just that – they do not have to be leaders!

We are in the process of organising a lunch on Tuesday, 19th May to show our appreciation for our Group Convenors (more information to follow). Group Convenors are the backbone of our u3a – without them we don't exist! So let me take this opportunity to thank them all on your behalf.

Please be aware that some groups will be finishing for the summer very soon and others when the schools break up. Check with the convenor if you are not sure. We will endeavour to have the correct information on the website.

Sue

Welcome to New Members

This month we welcome Angela, Kathleen & Jann

Name Badges: Spot the red dots!

You may notice red dots on some name badges at coming monthly meetings. We have started to put them on the badges of new members for the first four monthly meetings after they join. This is in direct response to comments that the meetings can seem a bit daunting to newcomers. Long-standing members are often deep in conversation with old friends - we are welcoming at heart, but can be unobservant. Please be vigilant for the red dots and make a special effort to include new members.

Monthly Member Meeting:



Catherine Gillies: A Right Good Yarn

Catherine takes a leery eye to a few big historical moments in North Lorn and considers the facts, or are they? When does history morph into story, and how does that matter? Come and join the discussion.

Catherine has spent a lifetime between being a journalist in Argyll and Orkney, and then helping Dunollie and many other community heritage sites to share their stories. Always interested in how we know what we know.

Oban u3a Group Reports (click the Group's name to go to its webpage):

[Art visits](#)

Art Workshops at The Rockfield, Oban: *Create with Jake*, Mixed Media Artist - he gives an informal art class [Scribble Portraits](#) on 5th April at 11am.

Awaken - Exhibition featuring works from the Argyll Collection on display and open to the public from 10th April to 28th April, Wednesday to Sunday, from 10.00am to 4.00pm, at Dunoon Burgh Hall.

The Argyll Collection is a nationally outstanding collection of 173 artworks, established between 1960 and 1990, as a unique learning resource for the young people of Argyll and Bute. Aiming to increase awareness of its educational and contemporary cultural value, Lily Vaughan has worked alongside CHARTS to develop *Awaken*, a new exhibition featuring selected works from the collection,

including works by Edward Gage, Agnes Parker Miller and Archibald Dunbar McIntosh.

Join us for the opening evening [Awaken](#), an exhibition curated by Lily Vaughan, Thursday 11 April 5.30pm - 8.00pm

Please contact Joy if interested in going to this exhibition with other u3a members.

[Astronomy](#)

There is no update this month.

[Bridge Group](#)



Already know how to play? The present group of Beginners are about to graduate and will be playing relaxed Bridge each afternoon so feel free to come and join them.

Would you like to learn to play? Beginners are welcome as we plan to start a new course of lessons after Easter.

The emphasis is on fun as you can see! Contact Sue P for more information.

[Craft Group](#)

We are due to meet at The Rockies on the 23rd April.

[Creative Writing Group](#)

For those who imagine that the group is serious and boring, let us assure you that having fun is our main priority! Do join us, relax and let your inner author come out.

We meet fortnightly at the Rowan Room Community Café in the Rockfield Centre.

[Discussion Group](#)

The Discussion Group is still meeting on the first and third Thursday of the month and is fully attended. Politicians and A.I. are still giving us far too much to talk about but individual members will be notified nearer the time



Fifi Fritz Ben & Ginger, from "A Dog's Life" by Pam Valentine

Drama

Meets on the second and fourth Tuesday mornings of the month at 10:45 in Dunbeg Church. We are still reading plays then discussing how they could be presented.

French Conversation Group

The French Conversation Group meets every Friday afternoon, during school term time, in the Lancaster Hotel dining room. We currently have space for a few new members of intermediate level French or above. Please note there will be no meeting on Good Friday, 3rd April.



Camellia, Achnacloich Garden - photo: D Dahl

Gardens and Wildflower Group

Visit to Fasnacloich Garden, Glen Creran, Monday 20th April at 2 pm by kind arrangement with the owners. Members of the group will be emailed with additional information nearer the time.

Geology Group

We have two meetings in April, Tuesday 14th April and Tuesday 21st April, both at 1.45 pm, Studio Theatre, Corran Halls. These will be the last indoor meetings until the autumn.

14th April: Geology of Scotland series: **The Northern Highlands Terrane.** So we have left the 3 billion year old Hebridean Terrane behind, have we? Well, not quite, as the question arises as to what is at the bottom of its next-door neighbour, the Northern Highlands Terrane or The Moine. At first sight it seems to be a vast area of schist, a metamorphic rocks formed from ocean floor sediments. But they must rest on something below – we will try to find out. And



these schists are terribly contorted, but by what event or events? The north-western boundary is of course the Moine Thrust, which we examined last time, but what forms the limits at the south-eastern boundary? Many questions to answer – let's try!

21st April: Life Story series: **From Palaeogene to Neogene:** there is never an end to the evolution of life, but

let's at least try to get up to date – well, perhaps up to 2.5 million years ago. It was a crucial stage in the evolution of the modern world, though severely taxed by the Quaternary that followed, the height of the last Ice Age. However as sea level fell, land bridges helped animal life to survive the developing ice age. Nevertheless there were extinctions – there always are!

[German Group](#)

The German Conversation Group continues to meet weekly at Graham's house in central Oban, Thursdays 10:30 to 12:00. Email the Convenor via the Group's webpage if interested – we can fit a couple more in. We chat to a given theme, read, and watch videos. The last video provoked a long discussion of the distinction between two words: Eifersucht (romantic jealousy/fear of loss) and Neid (envy of possessions or success) and whether they map on to jealousy and envy In English.



[Mahjong Group](#)

We meet, as always, every Monday in the Royal Hotel from 2-4pm. Please feel free to come and play or just to see what it is all about any Monday. We'll be there.

[Out and About Group](#)

On 11th April, we are taking a bus trip to Easdale and having lunch in the Oyster Bar.

On 16th April, we are going to Rockfield Centre to see the National Theatre Live perform All My Sons by Arthur Miller.

On 11th May we are attending the Big Quiz at the Rockfield Centre.

[Pickleball - Competitive](#)

The group plays in Atlantis from 09:00 to 10:30 on Friday mornings. We now have an active membership of 26 and regularly play on four courts instead of three. Please contact the convenor if interested.

[Pickleball - Recreational](#) and [Pickleball Plus](#)



The Recreational Pickleball group continues to meet in the Atlantis Centre, Mondays and Wednesdays 11.00-12.00. The group is now 35 strong with around 25 playing on a regular basis each week.

If you would like to join either or both groups, please contact [Peter Gray](#) for Wednesdays or [Gordon Muir-Jones](#) for Mondays.

Many who join and who already possess the necessary skill but lack the rules of the game, may move on quickly to join the Recreational or Competitive Pickleball groups once the fundamentals have been grasped.

The **Starter Group** is designed to explain the basic rules of the game of Pickleball and in the event of the member wishing to continue their Pickleball journey, to assist them in reaching a level whereby they feel comfortable joining the larger U3a Pickleball groups of which currently, there are three.

The Starter Group also allows for an assessment of fitness and skill level for any member wishing to try the sport, since an adequate level of fitness and mobility is required for health and safety reasons.

Due to the inconsistent numbers wishing to participate in StartUp Pickleball, it has been decided that a once monthly session will be held at Atlantis. The date of the next group session will be 22nd April, 2026 from 1100 - 1200. Any member who'd like to join in is very welcome - please contact the Convenor, [Caroline](#).

[Jane Austen Group](#)

We'll be meeting in the second half of April (date to be decided), to discuss the unfinished novel *Sanditon*, together with a couple of the author's letters. All welcome, for more, contact the Convenor, [Rosemary Power](#).

[Poetry Reading Group](#)

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 7th April at 2.00 p.m. The theme is Geography. Please let [Joy](#) know if you're coming and send poems for copying. Please send [Maurice](#) copies/links for the Anthology,

[Reading Group 1 - General](#)

We met on the 30th March to discuss "Precipice" by Robert Harris. Most of us found the story about the lead up to the first world war fascinating, particularly because it included some of the actual content of the letters Herbert Asquith sent to his 'girl friend', Venetia Stanley.

[Reading Group 2 - Crime](#)

We discussed "The Puppet Show" by M W Craven as our book for March. A little gruesome for some but a good plot and characterisation with several twists. We are full at present so not open to new members.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 9th April at 5pm in The Falls of Lora Lounge, Connel to discuss "Wilful Behaviour" by Donna Leon

Anyone wishing to form another "Crime" Book Group, please let [David H](#) know.

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

The Land in Winter by Andrew Miller (2024)

This novel was set in the West Country, during the big winter freeze of 1962/63, the main protagonists being two, young, but 'unhappy' married couples, from different backgrounds and social classes., who come together, clashing and colliding, revealing their flawed characters and intimate dramas, as they try to navigate their new lives in rural England during this period of winter hardship.

There were mixed views about this book; some found it engaging and an interesting story about post-war Britain, others found it depressing and unrelentingly bleak. Although the images of life at that moment in time, under snow and with the various privations and hardships, resonated with the group recalling that period in their own lives 64 years ago. (Quelle Horreur!)

Although we agreed that Andrew Miller is a successful, skilled and varied writer, it was pointed out that this is a book best appreciated when the reader is in a 'good space'. It is not an uplifting novel, although the various aspects of social, economic and cultural life at that time are captured well, warts and all.

All the Beauty in the World by **Patrick Bringley** (2023)

We unanimously agreed this autobiographical memoir, that takes place in the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, was an excellent read and very much enjoyed. The young author's journey, as he comes to terms with bereavement, is narrated with honesty, sincerity and with gentle enthusiasm for art and people alike. As Patrick walks the many miles around the different galleries, his grief gradually becomes more bearable and his engagement with the many artifacts and great works of art act as a balm for his troubled soul. We all felt that this is a book we could recommend wholeheartedly.

Our book choice for April is "Horse" by Geraldine Brooks (2022)

[Reading Group 4](#)

The next meeting will be on Thursday 23rd April at 2pm at Ganavan.

The book for April is "The Book Thief" by Marcus Zusak, the May book is "44 Scotland Street" by Alexander McCall Smith.

[Science and Technology Group](#)

The 2025/26 season of science talks has now finished, and our group will taking our usual break for the summer. However, activities will in recommence in September.

Our thanks to all who have attended our meetings and helped deliver another successful season, especially the speakers who have presented a wide range of interesting and inspiring presentations. During the summer we will start planning future activities and we welcome your feedback. So please do let us know your suggestions, interests and possible contributions. All ideas are welcome!

[Scottish History Group](#)

We will meet in the library at 2pm on Tuesday 14 April. The intended subject is the 'Declaration of Arbroath'. What is this? A Declaration of Rights? If so, for whom? Why Arbroath? Who was it addressed to? What was happening in Scotland and surrounding countries? And why do people talk about it today? All are welcome to join us.

[El Grupo Español](#)

Cada mes, escribo un mensaje aquí para nuestros miembros. ¿Estoy pensando - realmente, alguien lee estas cosas?

Si lo haces, dímelo en abril cuando salga el boletín.

[Table Tennis Group](#)

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

[Ukulele Group](#)

How about joining us as we sing and play our ukuleles? We would like new members and hope you'll come along and be part of our friendly and welcoming group. We plan to meet throughout the year. No ukulele? Members have kindly offered to bring along ukuleles to get you started and tuition is at hand.

Be good to see you - Tuesday evenings, 7 till 9, Congregational Church, Tweeddale Street (Just up from Chalmers shop. Enter street level, middle door.)

[Walk and Lunch Group](#)

Anyone who is interested in the Walk and Lunch group is welcome. The co-ordinator will send correspondence by e-mail.

Help required: Have you got any favourite cafes? What about leading one walk locally with your preferred cafe for lunch?



Walk and Lunch: Looking towards Benderloch
