

MAY 2026 NEWSLETTER



obanu3a@gmail.com

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Chair's Remarks

Worried about your little grey cells?

- join mahjong or bridge
- start a scrabble group
- practice a foreign language - French, German or Spanish
- start a British Sign Language group
- learn to play the ukulele
- try creative writing

Feeling sluggish, not taking enough exercise?

- try table tennis, walking or pickleball
- start a more strenuous walking group or less strenuous line dancing

Wanting to relax and meet like-minded people?

- join the drama, classic reads, Scottish history, poetry reading or book groups
- go to events with the Out & About, Arts Visits or Gardens and Wildflowers groups
- join the Science & Technology or Geology groups
- start a new craft or discussion group

We are so lucky to have so many opportunities within our u3a. See them all on our [website](#). Pop into [Beacon](#) and sign up for something new or ask for help at a monthly meeting.

I'm looking forward to meeting many of you at some of the above!

Sue
Interim Chair

Welcome to New Members

This month we welcome Alex, Carole, Colin, Fiona, Joy & Lorraine.



Monthly Member Meeting: James Fenton

**“All you ever wanted to know about ice:
and more”**

Do you know the difference between an ice sheet and an ice cap? A bergy bit and a growler? Fast ice and bit ice? Hoarfrost and rime? What is an ice foot or a moulin? All will be explained -

Corran Halls, 5th May, 10.30 for 11.

[Thank you Group Convenors!](#)

Thank you to all our group convenors - the backbone of the u3a. We appreciate all that you do throughout the year. The Committee looks forward to thanking you in person at the Group Convenors' Lunch on Tuesday, 19th May.

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

[Art visits](#)

Recommended: *Hamish Henderson: An Artist's Inspiration* is a 2025 documentary and portrait project by artist Charles Nasmyth that explores the life of the influential Scottish poet, folk-song collector, and intellectual. Nasmyth was moved by Henderson's humanitarian socialism, wartime service, and role in preserving Scottish culture, prompting him to paint a portrait and create a film with filmmaker Michael Lloyd, featuring interviews with those who knew him.

The film is showing at various venues in Scotland.

[Astronomy](#)

An exciting programme has been drafted but a venue and time have still to be determined.

Bridge Group

Congratulations to those who've graduated from Beginners to Improvers! 🎓

These folk are now playing relaxed Bridge each Thursday afternoon. Do come and join us.

We hope to start a new class for Beginners (and those who need to refresh their memories!) on Thursday 4th June. All welcome.

Craft Group

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

Creative Writing Group

*The Creative Writing Group is here for anyone.
All you need is pen and paper and a sense of fun!
If you think you couldn't write a poem, tale or song
You'd be surprised to find that you were very wrong!*

We'll continue to meet at the Rowan Room café in the Rockfield Centre at 2.30pm on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, which for May will be the 13th and 27th.

New members are very welcome and no experience is necessary, except for a love of words! Please contact the Convenor if you would like to join us.

Discussion Group

As usual the Discussion group meets twice a month and is full to capacity at the moment. As witnessed at our recent question and answer session on Nato there are sufficient of us still interested in our future to air our views and make a difference to our blood pressure if nothing else!

A second group is under consideration to give everyone a chance to participate, but we'd need a volunteer to run it. If you're interested, please email the convenor through the Group's webpage.

Drama

The drama Group had a visit to the Corran Halls in April to explore the mysteries of backstage and on 28th April will be visiting the Banderloch Drama Club's premises to see how productions are put together. On 12th May, the group will have their last meeting before the summer break in Dunbeg Church at 10.45

French Conversation Group

The French Conversation group meets every Friday afternoon during school term time, in the Lancaster Hotel dining room. We still have a few spaces for new folk, of intermediate French or above, to join us. Now would be a very good time, as we are just about to start reading a new book. For more information, contact Anne-Marie or Kathy, either through the Oban u3a website, or at the monthly coffee meetings.

Gardens and Wildflower Group



We had a delightful visit to Fasnacloich garden, where we enjoyed drifts of cuckoo flowers, wood anemones and lesser celandines, among early rhododendrons and young colourful acer shoots. New planting adds promise too! Whooper swans still adorned the lochan, and a diver fluffed up its plumage!!

Our next visit is planned for An Cala, Isle of Seil - an old favourite but under new ownership. We hope the weather will be favourable on Monday 18th May at 2 pm. The owner has agreed to share the original Thomas Mawson design with us. The garden is open by arrangement through the Scottish Gardens Scheme and a donation of £6 towards various causes, including the Oban RNLI, is requested. Parking will be outwith the garden.

These visits are arranged for group members only, and occasionally a maximum number is required.

Group members will be sent an email nearer the time for booking on to the visit.

Geology Group

We have ended our indoor programme for the season, with a break now until September.

Our next activity is the field excursion to the North-West Highlands (a UNESCO Global Geopark) to explore one of the most historically significant areas of ancient continental geology in the world, a region which is still the subject of much active research. It has wonderful scenery too! We have about 10 people signed up for the trip 22nd-24th September, but could accommodate one or two



more. Participants are responsible for their own transport, accommodation and meals. Any more group members interested in joining should email us at fleming.a.z@btinternet.com for more details.

Stac Pollaidh, a classic inselberg made of Torridonian sandstone and conglomerate (From Wikipedia under [GNU Free Documentation License](#).)

[German Group](#)

The German Conversation Group meets Thursdays 10:30 to 12:00 at Graham's house. We chat on a theme we have selected, read a book, and watch videos. If you don't have time, or are not ready for a conversation group, try the "Easy German" Youtube videos. They include "Slow German" and "Super Easy German" ones which are really useful, and often entertaining.

The group is planning to finish reading 'Emil und die Detektive' before winding up for Summer (when Thomas, our much appreciated native speaker, will be concentrating on his B&B business). Our recent themes included "Tell a German tourist what to see in and around Oban", and "Explain to a German the peculiarities of Scotland and the Scots".

[Mahjong Group](#)

We continue to meet in the Royal Hotel every Monday at 2pm throughout the year. New members welcome.

[Out and About Group](#)

The Out and About group is attending a quiz night at the Rockfield Centre on Monday 11th May at 7.15. If anyone wants to join in, please let Linda know.

[Picklball - Competitive](#)

The group plays in Atlantis from 09:00 to 10:30 on Friday mornings. We now have an active membership of 27 and regularly play on four courts instead of three. Please contact the convenor if interested.

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

The Recreational Pickleball groups continue to prosper on Wednesday and Monday: we had 16 players on both days this week and new players continue to join.



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 27 May 2026 from 1100 - 1200. Any member who'd like to join in is very welcome - please contact the Convenor, [Caroline](#).

Reading Group [Classic Reads](#)

The Jane Austen group is transforming into a Classic Reads group - reading and discussing works by noted authors - not necessarily their best known works. We'll meet once a month at Joy's. New members welcome.

Our next meeting will be at 2pm on Monday 8th June to discuss George Eliot's 'Scenes From Clerical Life'. We're a small group as yet and may have some flexibility about meeting times/days.

Reading Group [Poetry](#)

Our next meeting is at 2.00 on Tuesday 5th May and the theme is Food. Poems to Maurice for the Anthology & to Joy for copying, please, if they're needed for the meeting. Do let Joy know if you're coming to the meeting. Also, please make Maurice's job easier by sending the poems in a format he can copy and paste into the anthology. If it's available online and you can send the link, that would be a help.

[Reading Group 1 - General](#)

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

Reading Group 2 - Crime

We discussed 'Wilful Behaviour' by Donna Leon this month. An easy read and enjoyable evocation of Venice. The plot has several twists and there is good characterisation of Commissario Brunetti both at home discussing the case with wife Paulo and in the office eliciting information from his colleagues and witnesses.

The next meeting will be on Thursday 14th May at 5pm in The Falls of Lora Lounge, Connel to discuss 'A Trick of the Light' by Louise Penny.

For those wishing to join a new Bookclub with the emphasis on Crime, please contact Julia Bateson julia.bateson@outlook.com

Reading Group 3 - Fact and Fiction

'Horse' by Geraldine Brooks (2022)

We had a good discussion about this book, even though the title made several of the group somewhat apprehensive. Some expressed their reservations concerning the exploitation of such a noble beast for financial purposes through horse racing. We tried to steer clear of this and focus on the positives.

This 'historical fiction' novel is based on true characters and real events. The horse, Lexington, was one of the most famous, record breaking, race horses in the world and the story revolves around him; Jarret, his groom; Lexington's skeleton and its reconstruction and the paintings of him during his life and times in 1850s Kentucky.

However, it has many threads linking that period through to contemporary America covering art, science, slavery, racial injustices and cross-cultural relationships, blending fact with fiction to create a gripping story about a Horse.

The book was researched thoroughly by the Australian-American, Pulitzer prize winning author, who fills this novel with a vast range of information and possibilities, as she weaves a love story about a horse and a black slave. Although we had a number of reservations about the story, plus the need to suspend belief regarding some of the events, we all found it a good, easy and interesting read, one we can recommend without reservation.

Our book for May is **'The Place of Tides'** by **James Rebanks** (2025)

Reading Group 4

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 28th May at 2pm at Ganavan. The book for May is '44 Scotland Street' by Alexander McCall Smith.

New members are welcome to join us, our venue is very accessible.

Science and Technology Group

The 2025/26 season of Science Group meetings has now finished, and the group is taking the usual break for the summer. Activities will resume 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 thoughts and feedback. So please do let us know your suggestions, interests and possible contributions. All ideas are welcome! Please write to us at obanu3ascience@gmail.com

Scottish History Group

There's no meeting this month but we will be meeting on 9th June. Please see details of meetings on the website.

El Grupo Español

Los detalles de nuestra visita a Ilha de Deus, Tiroran, Mull, son como así:

La fecha: el 6 de mayo

Ida: por ferry, temprano, a las 07.25

Vuelta: por ferry, a las 17.05

N.B. Hay que estar en fila 10 minutos antes de salida de ferry. Compra su billete en antelación, £8.50.

Autobus: West Coast Motors con destino de Fionnphort (!no Tobermory!), £2.
Baja del autobus por el senal 'Scenic Route to Salen' que esta al final de Loch Scridain. Ida - 08.30 Vuelta - 16.05

Tranferir a casa con John y Tony en dos vehiculos.

Table Tennis Group

We have resumed play after the Easter holidays and are delighted to welcome some new members to our happy little Group. No matter your level of play we would love you to join us for some fun and gentle exercise. 2.00pm Mondays at Atlantis Leisure.

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?

Editor's note

Do you recognise this issue's banner? It's from part of some astonishing mosaic work in a garden off Craigar Road (on the way up to McCaig's Tower), the work of a local printmaker who gave me her blessing to reproduce it here. Do **you** have a photo which would crop to make a good banner? If so, I'd be delighted to use it.
