u3a Oban

# NOVEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER




obanu3a@gmail.com Web Facebook Beacon Members Portal

**Chair's Remarks**
As Autumn comes blowing in and the clocks go back, don't hibernate. Come and join in one of our many activities. Exercise your mind or body as you continue to learn in a relaxed welcoming environment. From art to walking, drama to table tennis, there is something for everyone. If not, contact us to set up a new group!
Sue

**Welcome to New Members**
This month, we welcome Colum, Derek, Jeanette, Karen, Mary, Sarah C, Sarah S & Ruth. We hope to see you at forthcoming events.

**Christmas Lunch**
Our Christmas Dinner will take place in the Royal Hotel on Tuesday, 1st December 12 for 12.30 at a cost of £24.95 per person. All are very welcome to join us.You can see the menu here (although the trifle has been replaced by fruit salad). Please make payment by BACS, cheque or cash as soon as possible and email Mary to confirm your attendance. Mary & Julia will be on hand at the November meeting to collect payment. Cheques payable to Oban u3a; Sort Code 80-22-60 Account no 23901569. If paying by BACS, please add your name as reference. All payments must be received by Friday 20th November. No refunds can be made for cancellations after Monday 23rd November. Please note that there will be no coffee morning or talk in December.



**Monthly Member Meeting:**

**Maurice Wilkins: "The Streets of London" - Tuesday 3rd November 11am**

Maurice is a stalwart of Oban Photographic Club with a particular interest in street photography.

On frequent visits to London over many years, he has gone walkabout with his camera. This talk is a compilation of shots that took his fancy with snippets of related stories. The images are diverse and entertaining but make no pretence of providing a geographical or historical education.

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

## Art visits

Notice of a clay workshop and an exhibition at ***An Tobar*** Tobermory:

- https://www.antobarandmulltheatre.co.uk/whats-on/clay-days-with-rebecca-form-and-play-9cd5d
- https://www.antobarandmulltheatre.co.uk/whats-on/to-know-the-world-we-live

*To Know The World We Live* celebrates the voyage of 12 creators across the disciplines of philosophy, science, and art through the Skaggerak, North Sea, and Baltic Sea. Together, over 3 weeks and 777 miles aboard The Excelsior, a 30-foot traditional fishing smack built over 100 years ago.

*The **Arts Society Lomond and Argyll Lectures**, Helensburgh:*
These are open to Members (free) and Guests (£10) – visit **https://www.tasla.org.uk/** for Membership info. Art themed ones below:

- 12th January 2027 *Balenciaga, Dior and Fath* by Scott Schiavone
- 9th February 2027 *Rock of Ages: Medieval Stone Masons* by James Wright

## Astronomy

The Astronomy group will be suspending their meetings until further notice as we are still seeking additional (technical) help because of the vast number of people interested in learning how to operate their personal telescopes, as well as how to read the night skies. Both of which require a bit of equipment know-how, site planning and possibly many evening hours under some very dark and elusive clear skies. Meantime, Liz Muir-Jones can provide group members with monthly sky maps and potential events and items to observe, should you be interested.

## Bridge Group

A core group of folk are enjoying playing Bridge in a relaxed atmosphere every Thursday afternoon in Kilmore Hall. We have players new and old and welcome anyone of any standard!

## Craft Group

There's no update this month. Please see webpage for further details

## Creative Writing Group

*Remember, remember the 11th of November*
*And of course on the 25th too!*
*To read out our writing is very exciting*
*And with mystery objects to view.*
*So come down to Rockfield and meet with the team*
*If you're hoping to join in some fun!*
*At two-thirty o'clock - and you won't need to knock -*
*We'll be sitting here ready to run.*

## Discussion Group

October saw the discussion group meet in the Royal Hotel as usual between 2-4 pm on the first and third Thursday of the month.

Topics discussed were varied as usual. We try to discuss a serious topic and a slightly lighter one. Often discussions go off topic and it is always different every meet.

If you are interested in joining us please complete the contact form on Beacon.

## Drama

The drama group has reconvened since the summer, read a play and discussed future plans. Meetings will be held on 10th November, 24th November, 8th December and possibly 22nd December.

## French Conversation Group

The French Conversation Group meets on Friday afternoons in the Lancaster Hotel. The group is currently full. Any future potential members will be starting a waiting list. Thank you for your understanding. There are still spaces in the u3a Interest Groups Online Intermediate French.

## Geology Group

We have two sessions planned for November. The Life Story sequence is nearing the end, so the session on Tuesday 10th November will be the next to last as Bob looks at more aspects of the Palaeogene and Neogene. However, true to form, new ideas and developments are happening and it may take more than one session to deal with some important developments. As a result the following session on 24thNovember has yet to be decided, as the second part of the Grampian Terrane story in the Geology of Scotland (indeed about the rocks literally beneath our feet around Oban) is also looking for its turn!

So we will let you know later what that session will be!

Please note that we have not planned any Geology sessions in December – we feel other events (shopping?) will be capturing your attention! The next session will be when everyone has recovered from Hogmanay – 12th January.

## German Group / Deutsch Gesprächsgruppe

Normalerweise treffen wir uns Donnerstage 10:30 bis 12:00 bei Graham. Wir machen jetzt aber eine pause bis 12. November. Wir genießen das Buch "Vom Ende der Einsamkeit" und machen schnelle Fortschritt damit.




Unser neueste Gesprächsthema war "Wie ich mich entspanne". Wir haben herausgefunden dass Graham nie sich enspannt und dass die anderen zum entspannen lesen.

## Line Dancing

We have had our first session in the Glencruitten Church Centre. It was great fun , everyone enjoyed it and is looking forward to the next one. We did remarkably well for our first time, thanks to our very able teacher, Christine Robertson who, somehow, managed to get us all turning in the same direction at the same time.

## Mahjong Group

The ever expanding group is doing well. Our new players are settling in nicely and enjoying it. We play every Monday from 2-4pm in the Royal Hotel. All welcome. No experience necessary.

## Out and About Group

There's no update this month. Please see webpage for further details

## Picklball - Competitive

For the month of November we will be at our normal time from 09:00 to 10:30 every Friday. 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

For **less competitive** players, there are sessions on Monday and Wednesday mornings. Please contact the convenors for more information.

Problems with hall availability mean that the date for the next **StartUp** Pickleball will be at some point in December yet to be advised. As usual, any interested members to contact me via the members email.

## Reading Group Classic Reads

**Classic Book reads** has not got a  steady date and time as yet, but our last meeting concerned Oscar Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray*. and the reasons it caused opposition (before his very public trial and imprisonment).  contact the convenor if you would like to join.

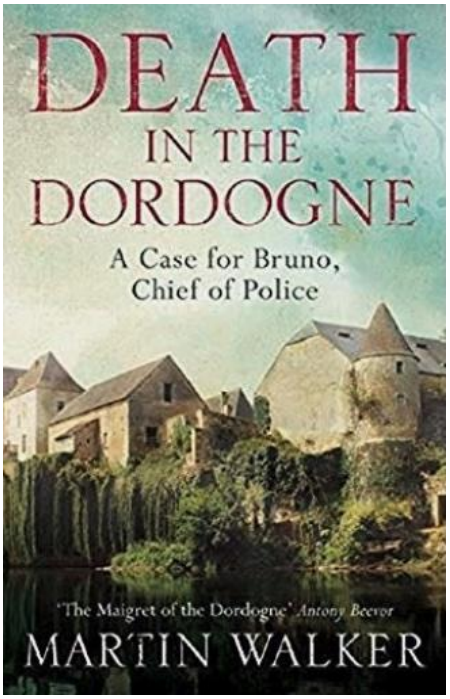
## Poetry Reading Group

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 3rd November at 2.00 p.m.  The theme is Surprise (or Surprises).

Please let me know if you can come.  Poems to me for copying in advance, please, if you can, and do send your choices to Maurice, too, for inclusion in the Anthology, whether you can come or not.

## Reading Group 1 - General

October's book was "Butt and Ben: A Highland Childhood" by Donald Sutherland.This was a relatively easy read that gives insights into a way of life for a fairly privileged boy living in a large house up the hill from MacCaig's tower at the turn of the nineteenth century up to WW1. There are lots of anecdotes about a variety of characters in Oban at that time and it gives a picture of the life of an upper class family. There is little about the ordinary folk of Oban as Donald was not allowed to mix with children outside his own class. During the holidays home from boarding school he was encouraged to learn about hunting, shooting and fishing. He had access to a highland pony and a dinghy in the bay. Life within the family was strict and without much obvious affection but Donald himself came over as a fairly well-rounded personality. The book was enjoyed by all and certainly gave a picture of a way of life no longer much encountered here in Oban.




## Reading Group 2 - Crime

Martin Walker's 'Death in the Dordogne' is the first book of a series of 25, following the endeavours of Bruno Courreges, Chief of Police of St Denis.

The book divided opinion, ranging from those who loved it to those who had a less than good opinion. For all that, there was agreement that it was evocative of this beautiful corner of France with its wonderful countryside, people and cuisine. It was atmospheric, an easy read, cosy crime.

Our next meeting is on 12th November at 17.00 in the Falls of Lora Hotel. Our book choice is 'The Darkness' by Ragnar Jonasson, author of the popular 'Dark Iceland' series; a far cry from the Dordogne.

Our popular group remains fully-subscribed. Anyone interested in joining a new Crime Club should contact Julia Bateson

## Reading Group 3 - Fact and Fiction

*'Circe' by Madeline Miller (2018)*
We had an enthusiastic discussion about this book. We all agreed that Circe, the protagonist witch in this original retelling of parts of The Odyssey, in a mythical, fantasy novel, was definitely a woman of dynamic, feminist power and determination. The story is complex and somewhat convoluted, as the author

weaves together the recognisable ancient mythical stories and characters with reinvented relationships and newly fabricated events of Circe's life.

This is a book that you need to enjoy through total immersion, going with the creative flow, visualising the imagery, basking in the sultry heat and feeling the mad flow of ancient Greece. You have to put aside the time frames and suspend a lot from your childhood memories regarding tales from The Odyssey.

We all thoroughly enjoyed this story of a strong, powerful, single minded woman, who overcame the odds to find ***herself,*** amidst the misogyny and patriarchy of the Gods - and bitchy Godesses - seeking to isolate, humiliate and destroy her. The author puts a very contemporary spin on this tale, giving her readers the opportunity to revisit Circe's story in a redemptive, revisionist light.

Our November book is 'The Boy from the Sea' by Garrett Carr (2025)

## Reading Group 4

The next meeting is at Ganavan on Thursday 26th November at 2pm. The book is 'Loving & Giving' by Molly Keane.

There will be no meeting in December.

## Science and Technology Group

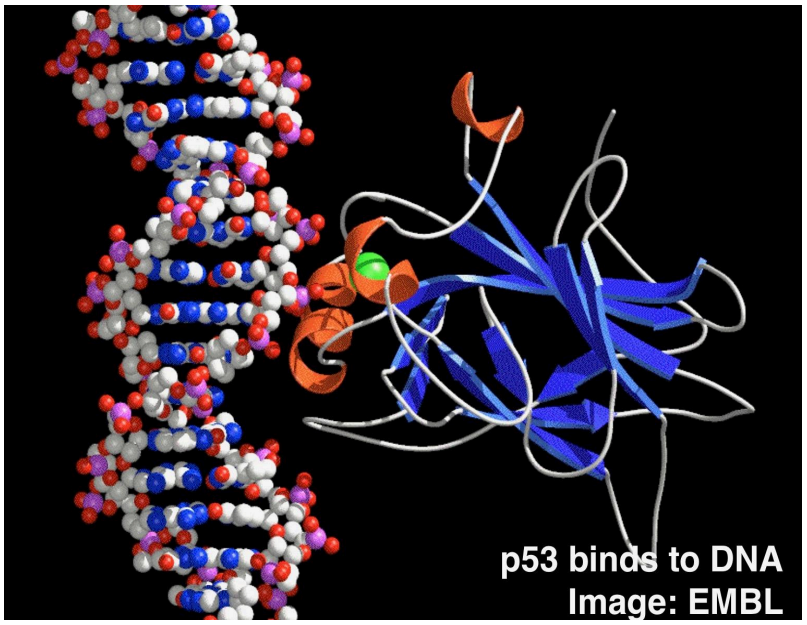
We have two meetings this month:

Wednesday 4th November at 2:15pm in the Studio Theatre, Corran Halls***:*** ***Climate tipping points: Super El Ninos?*** by Ray Leakey.

We are currently experiencing an extreme Super El Nino in the Pacific Ocean which may have unprecedented disruptive impacts on global climate and economies. But how concerned should we be about this natural climate phenomenon? How will it affect the UK? Are we seeing an increase in the frequency and intensity of El Ninos? If so, is this increase driven by climate change and could a Super El Nino trigger a devastating climate tipping point?

Continuing the u3a science “Climate” theme, this talk will address these questions by examining the science behind the headlines.

And on Wednesday 25th November at 2:15pm in the Studio Theatre, Corran Hall ***Beyond the Human Genome*** by Graham Cameron




If the human genome is the secret of life, is the dictionary the secret of language? It's more than twenty years since we announced the completion of the human genome – with great fanfare. The promises to science and biomedical application were trumpeted.

However, the genome looks much simpler than we expected. Humans are however undeniably among the most complex of organisms. It turns out that the raw genome only scratches the surface of how life works. It was an essential step on the way, but the complexity is more fascinating and ingenious than we imagined.

Developments in molecular biology since the completion of the genome are nothing short of a paradigm shift.

Graham writes "I'll give a quick refresher in the biological runup to the genome and Francis Crick's "Central Dogma", and a sketch of discoveries that challenge this simplicity and provoke a new way of thinking. (All from my perspective as an observer rather than a scientist)."

*Please note that the talk on Lipids by Bob Batty, scheduled for November 11th, has now been delayed until after Christmas.*

**n.b. our meetings are aimed at a mixed audience with content accessible to all. You don't need any prior scientific knowledge or experience to join us.**

## Scottish History Group

Scottish history will reconvene in January with a variety of speakers on different periods. More in the December issue.

## El Grupo Español

Como sabeis estoy en bici cruzando la media de Espana. Manana  el ultimo dia.

Aqui es un senal visto en los aseos de in bar en Aranjuez:

Mea tranquilo
Mea contento
Pero sobretodo
Mea dentro.

## Table Tennis Group

The Table Tennis Group plays at 2.00pm on Monday afternoons at Atlantis Leisure.  The charge per session is £2.00.  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.

## 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, Tweedale Street (Just up from Chalmers shop. Enter street level, middle door.)

## Walking Group

Although the walking group has not been active for some months there's been work behind the scenes and some of you have been expressing your interest. There's a wide range of walking activities requested, from Munro bashing at one extreme to light walks for improving wellbeing, mobility or fitness, with a sprinkling of those desiring a gentle lunch walk in between.

It's important that we note the very wide range of physical capabilities that has been shown. For everyone's wellbeing and safety prospective participants will be required to complete a PARQ+ form (Physical Activity Readiness Questionnaire plus needs analysis); this data will be securely stored and will only be available to walk leaders. In addition, walk leaders will be required to complete a risk

assessment for every walk route. This keeps us in line with activity industry standards and insurance requirements.

It is likely that some provision can be met to keep everyone walking either by regular U3a organised walks accommodating each different ability group or facilitating contact between those serious hill walkers for whom we cannot currently make provision. I would also hope for a regular walk every 2 or 3 months where we can all get together on a walk that all can participate in.
As the nights draw in. and to allow more time for planning, it's unlikely that any activities will be organised until early in the new year. If you're interested in walking in a sociable and friendly atmosphere that does bring real health and wellbeing benefits, please email Cameron.

Edited by David Alcock, obanu3anews@gmail.com