



Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter



February 2026

Editor – John Giovanacci – publicity@falkirku3a.uk

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

A warm welcome to the February 2026 edition of the Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter. I know we can expect bad weather in December and January, but I don't remember there being so much rain. Much of the ground must be saturated with water and I wonder how much more water it can take. I do hope you have not been adversely affected by the miserable, wet weather.

I would like to thank Elaine Grant, from Falkirk Delivers, for her interesting talk, photographs and films on the Falkirk town centre at our recent Open Meeting. It's good to see that there is so much hard work and initiatives going in to keeping the town centre clean, tidy and inviting. The Festival of Trees was just one example of the initiatives taking place.

I recently saw a film on Facebook of the Falkirk town centre in the 1990's. The film showed a busy, vibrant town centre full of shops. Alas, as Elaine pointed out, those days are consigned to history. If the town centre is to survive in some form, it must adapt to the changing world of shopping. From what Elaine was saying this appears to be happening with, for example, the old Wilko store being converted into accommodation for one hundred college students. It also appears that the town centre shop owners are keen to hear whether the town hall project is to go ahead or not, as it is felt that this project will help to stimulate business in the town. I believe news on whether the Council will approve the project is expected shortly.

We have been advised by the u3a main office that tickets are now available for the **u3a Festival 26** which is to be held between Wednesday, 1st and Friday, 3rd July 2026 at the University of York. Further details regarding the Festival can be found by clicking on the following link <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/festival-2026>.

Our current Treasurer is considering stepping down from the post. Can anyone interested in taking over as Treasurer please contact me at chair@falkirku3a.uk so that we can discuss what is involved in undertaking the duties of the post.

May I wish you all a happy and contented February and March.

Peter Kahan

A mindfulness thought

"Realize deeply that the present moment is all you have."

Eckhart Tolle

Speakers for Monthly Meetings

(By Jack Egde)

As our Speaker Secretary I follow the process of selecting speakers for our monthly meetings by firstly finding an interesting topic and then getting that speaker to come along to one of our programmed meeting dates. It is desirable to have all the speakers for the coming session booked up before the registration meeting in September, so that our full programme for that session is available for all members to see. This entails approaching potential speakers with suggested dates, over a period, until all the available dates are fulfilled. I try to achieve a mixture of historical topics, famous people's stories, and informative talks by local or community organisations that could offer specialised assistance to some of our members or their families.

There are different ways of finding the speakers. Some are readily found through internet sites and online searches as well as other recommendations by members. Some of our best talks have come from our own u3a members, talking about their own subjects and life experiences. So, if you have a subject that you can share with our members, or you know someone willing to give a talk, then please contact me with the details and I will follow it up. Next year's programme is up for grabs right now.

The basic ethos of the u3a is continued education and learning through friendly association with other members who can pass on their own knowledge to a wider audience. So, please let me hear from you.

Interest Group Section

Craft Group

(By Toni Smillie)

The craft group had a fun session in January making small leather items - cable tidies, zip pulls / key rings and purses.

In February (Feb 17th) we are going a bit "arty" making silhouette magazine strip art.

If you are interested in crafting, then contact me and join the Craft Group mailing list - craft@falkirku3a.uk

Each month I will send out notification to the members on the mailing list, then places will be awarded on a first come first served basis.

If there is a large response - I will consider holding an extra session.

There will be a small charge per session to cover the cost of crafting supplies.



Ten-Pin Bowling Group

(By Jan Livingstone)

Update on meetings – Group meetings will be held on the 2nd and 3rd Monday of each month. I will try and reserve lanes for 1.30 pm start of play. Notification will be sent to all members if start time not available. Please arrive at 1 pm so you can sign into both free parking and gaming. Remember to advise myself number of games each member wishes to play.

Anyone wishing to join the Group can find out more about Tenpin Falkirk on their website <https://www.tenpin.co.uk/our-locations/falkirk/> and their address in Camelon is

Falkirk Tenpin

Camelon

FK1 4HJ

If you are thinking of becoming a member of the Group, please contact me in the first instance by email bowling@falkirk3a.uk providing your phone number and preferred method of communication, either WhatsApp, which is the most popular, or by text messaging.

Film Group

(By John Giovanacci)

The January meeting was cancelled as I was enjoying a city break in Edinburgh taking in a concert by Ashley Campbell and her band. Ashley is the daughter of Glen Campbell, and she has certainly inherited her late Dad's singing and musical ability.

Back to normal this month and I will be showing the first film directed by Steven Spielberg in which you can see a lot of the ideas he used in some of his later films. The film is **Duel** from 1971 and is best described as a game of cat and mouse with a psychological edge to it.

Dennis Weaver is driving in the California desert on his way to meet a client, but his journey becomes a nightmare as he is pursued by a massive truck. Although it's a 'made for TV' film I think the bigger screen makes it feel even more terrifying. Looking forward to showing this one.

Scrabble Club

(By Peter Kahan)

Did you have an opportunity to answer the two quiz questions in the January 2026 Newsletter? In case you did not, here are the answers.

If all the numbers from one to hundred are written out in words alphabetically, which word would come first? **Eight**

Presbyterians is not just a religious denomination; it's also an anagram of the name of a singer of 'Toxic' and 'Gimme More?' What is the name of the singer? **Britney Spears**

Did you know that there are 1,351 valid three letter words in the English language, and I sometimes feel that my fellow Scrabble Club members know most of these words? Here are a few three letter words which you may wish to explore the meaning of:
arf, cly, ewk, luz and rya.

Answers in the next edition of this Newsletter.

February in the Garden

(By The Gardening Guru)

February is the time to get on top of the garden before the weeds start to take over. Clear any leaves that are still lying around and do some winter pruning on a dry day. Towards the end of the month, visit your local garden centre and select from the copious amount of seeds they will have on display. Great satisfaction can be obtained from knowing you started your summer display from seeds rather than from plug plants - and it's cheaper too. Start sowing your seeds towards the end of the month in a warm place indoors or in a greenhouse for a colourful floral display or delicious home-grown vegetables in the summer.

Maths Teasers

(By Peter Kahan)

How did you find the two maths teasers in the January 2026 Newsletter: straightforward or a little challenging? Don't worry if you were not able to solve them as the two questions are repeated here along with their solutions.

Question 1

Find the value of x in the following equation.

$$\frac{x + x + x}{\sqrt{9}} = \sqrt{9}$$

Solution

There are a few different ways you can solve this problem. Here is my solution.

First we will remember that the $\sqrt{9} = 3$ so we can rewrite the equation as follows:

$$\frac{x + x + x}{3} = 3 \text{ or } \frac{3x}{3} = 3 \text{ or } x = 3$$

Question 2

The following question has been taken from the SQA 2025 NQ5 Mathematics Paper 2 (Calculator Paper).

Change the subject of the formula to k .

$$B = \frac{1}{4} kc^2 - 3c$$

Solution

This question is an example of transposition of formula, which in my experience most students find hard to do. Essentially, we are trying to get k on its own rather than B .

We can proceed as follows:

Take $-3c$ to the other side of the equation in which case it becomes $+3c$ as shown below

$$\frac{1}{4} kc^2 = B + 3c$$

Multiply both sides of the equation by 4 as shown below.

$$kc^2 = 4B + 12c$$

And finally divide both sides of the equation by c^2 which gives

$$k = \frac{4B + 12c}{c^2}$$

February Math Teasers

Here are another two new maths teasers for you to try in February/March.

Question 1

Find the missing number XX

$$2 + 9 = 22$$

$$3 + 9 = 36$$

$$4 + 9 = 52$$

$$5 + 9 = XX$$

Question 2

Find the value of t in the following equation.

$$\frac{t x t x t x t}{t + t + t + t} = \frac{80}{5}$$

Answers in the next edition of this Newsletter.

February Fun Facts

Groundhog Day is a well-known North American custom celebrated on 2nd February in both USA and Canada. It comes from the Pennsylvania Dutch tradition that says if a groundhog coming out of its burrow on this day sees its shadow because of clear weather, it will go back into its lair and winter will last for another 6 weeks, if it doesn't see because of cloudiness, spring will come early.



The Lunar New Year 2026 is on 17 February and will be the Year of the Horse. The horse is the symbol of freedom, vitality, energy, independence, enthusiasm and ambition, so, this is a good year for self-development and personal growth.