



Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter



February 2025

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FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

My I begin these comments by saying that I hope that you did not experience any house, garden or car damage from the dreadful storm on 24th January, but if, unfortunately, you did, I hope you have found someone to repair it by now. The force of the winds at times on 24th were both amazing but also frightening. A walk-through parts of the Callendar Estate give an indication of the strength of the wind, with a significant number of large trees uprooted.

I have a confession to make, I have not kept my New Year's resolution to do Wordle every day to improve my Scrabble skills. My excuse, which is not very plausible, is that I simply forgot to do it. Meantime, I continue to finish Scrabble games in my customary position of last. Oh, well, it is fun taking part and the conversation is good too.

At the Open Meeting on 4th February, we had a very interesting talk on Maggie Centres given by Cristina Pousa. Cristina explained some of the history and the work of Maggie Centres. These centres provide much needed emotional, financial and practical advice and support not only to cancer sufferers but to their families as well. For those of us who have been on the cancer journey such advice and support is invaluable in dealing with the many twists and turns of that journey

The elections to the new u3a Council and Board are drawing to a conclusion. You still have a little time to vote using the following link <https://forms.gle/hAkMmQDFmL9tGGc36> The link not only provides boxes to click on to identify your choice of candidate/candidates, but also information about each of the candidates. Voting is due to close by 21st February 2025, so we would be grateful if you could submit your votes by **Tuesday, 18th February 2025** so that we can count the votes for each candidate and submit Falkirk and Districts u3a's choice of candidate to sit on the Council, and candidates to sit on the Board.

Just for information, Margaret Fiddes, who was recently elected as Vice Chair of the Third Age Trust, has had to step down for personal reasons.

I do hope that you continue to keep warm and safe in February and March 2025 and do watch out for those first signs that spring is on its way.

A mindfulness thought

'In the garden of your mind, plant seeds of kindness and watch love bloom.'



Peter Kahan

Interest Group News

Film Group

Well Storm Eowyn put paid to my planned screening of the excellent Danish film **The Guilty** which I will now show later in the year. I will be showing **Gentlemen Prefer Blondes** as planned this month and I'm sure our Group will enjoy this fun film with Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell in fine form with lots of singing, dancing and crazy antics.

Jack and Aileen from the Film Group were down in Wales recently and they found a great wee cinema in Tywyn. They went one afternoon to see 'A Complete Unknown', an excellent film about the early life of Bob Dylan. You can get food and drinks delivered to your seat before the film starts which sounds just great and here are some photos of their experience.



John Giovanacci

Scrabble Club

Here are the meanings of the five new words in the January 2025 Newsletter taken from the Collins English Dictionary.

banchan - (in [Korean](#) [cooking](#)) small [portions](#) of food served in [addition](#) to a main [dish](#)

cachumber - Indian cooking - a [salad](#) of [chopped](#) [onion](#), [tomato](#), [cucumber](#), and (sometimes) other vegetables, typically seasoned with [chilli](#) and [coriander](#), served as an [accompaniment](#) to a main meal

floof - another word for [fluff](#) or an exceptionally [furry](#) or [hairy](#) animal, esp. a [cat](#) or dog

grammable - used to describe an image etc that merits being posted on Instagram

hoglet - a [young](#) [hedgehog](#)

Here are some unusual words we discovered at a recent Scrabble Club which you may wish to explore the meanings of: *brose*, *lee*, *prow*, *ruche*, and *toque*. The meaning of these words will be given in next month's Newsletter.

Maths Teaser

How did you get on with the two maths teasers in the January 2025 Newsletter? Were you able to solve them or not? Not to worry if you could not solve them as a restatement of the questions and the solutions to both of the questions are shown below.

Problems

Question 1

What are the next three numbers in the following sequence of numbers?

4, 6, 9, 6, 14, 6, ?, ?, ?

Solution

You will probably have noticed that the number 6 appears as the second, fourth and sixth numbers in the sequence of numbers. It is not unreasonable to assume that based on this trend, the eighth number in the sequence will be 6 as well. Thus, the sequence becomes

4, 6, 9, 6, 14, 6, ?, 6, ?

Looking at the first two numbers $4 + 6 = 10$ and $10 - 1 = 9$. Likewise looking at the third and fourth numbers $9 + 6 = 15$ and $15 - 1 = 14$. If we follow this trend, the seventh number will be $14 + 6 = 20$ and $20 - 1 = 19$ and the ninth number will be $19 + 6 = 25$ and $25 - 1 = 24$.

Thus, the sequence of numbers is as follows:

4, 6, 9, 6, 14, 6, 19, 6, 24

Question 2

Jim can dig a hole in 50 minutes. Alan can dig the same hole in 40 minutes. How long will it take to dig the hole if they work together?

- a) 45 minutes
- b) 32.7 minutes
- c) 22.2 minutes
- d) 16.5 minutes

You must justify your answer.

Solution

The mathematical solution to this question is as follows:

Let T = the time taken working together

$$\frac{1}{T} = \frac{1}{50} + \frac{1}{40}$$

Or

$$\frac{1}{T} = 0.02 + 0.025 = 0.045$$

Thus,

$$T = \frac{1}{0.045} = 22.2 \text{ minutes}$$

So the correct answer is c).

Of course, you could have taken a reasonable guess at the answer without any mathematics. With two men digging the hole, one could reasonably assume that 45 minutes is too long to dig the hole. On the other hand 16.5 minutes would seem too short a time to dig the hole. This leaves 32.7 minutes or 22.2 minutes to consider and as 22.2 minutes is closer to half the time to dig the hole with 1 man it seems reasonable that this is the correct answer.

However, one member I spoke to about the problem suggested that the hole might take longer than 50 minutes to dig as each man would get in the way of the other. What do you think?

February's maths teasers

Here are two more questions for you to try.

Question 1

How can 5 plus 9 equal 2?

Question 2

The second question is taken from the 2024 National Qualifications 5 - Applications of Mathematics Paper 2 (calculator paper). It is an interesting probability question for you try.

A lottery consists of a draw with 49 balls numbered from 1 to 49. In the draw six numbered balls are drawn and not replaced. These six numbers were 3, 7, 12, 13, 28 and 42. A further bonus ball is then drawn. Calculate the probability of the bonus ball being a number less than 8.

Gardening Guru

I hope Storm Eowyn did not do too much damage in your garden but just check that the roots of shrubs are still firmly in the soil.

Thinking of altering an area of the garden this year or have you moved house? Why don't you take some photos of the area before you start the work. You will then have a record of the changes you make.

Later in the month, providing the weather is not too cold, you can start planting seeds on a sunny windowsill or in a heated greenhouse. Save your egg boxes for your early potatoes. At the end of the month, the potatoes can be put in the egg boxes and chitted (allowed to start sprouting) on a windowsill.

In the meantime, enjoy all the snowdrops that are flowering just now.

