



Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter



June 2026

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FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

I am pleased to introduce the June 2026 edition of the Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter. It is difficult to believe that we are at the end of the 2025/26 session of the Falkirk and District u3a. Time does really seem to fly by nowadays. I was gratified to see how active all the interest groups had been in the 2025/26 session. If you have not already done so, I would encourage you to read the 2025/26 Group Annual Review so that you can see for yourself what the groups did in the 2025/26 session. To read the Review click on the following link: <https://falkirku3a.uk/images/u3a/documents/AGM25-26/Appendix1GroupReview.pdf>.

I would like to thank Jack Egdeell very much for his excellent talk on Thomas Telford – the Colossus of Roads. I did not realise just what impact Telford had on the development of the Scottish transport infrastructure. He was hired to bring the Scottish Highlands into the 'modern age.' This included engineering over 900 miles of new roads, 120 bridges and the 60-mile long Caledonian Canal. A remarkable man indeed.

You might recall that in last month's Newsletter I mentioned that the u3a Trust are running a Festive Fringe to the u3a Festival 26 which members can take part in from home. You can now book your spot at *u3a Festival Fringe*. The Fringe will run from 25th June to 10th July 2026. It features a mixture of talks and interactive activities. This specially curated programme of online events complements the activities at the in-person Festival so that, wherever you are, you can be part of the fun. For more details regarding the Festival Fringe please click on the following link [Explore the activities](#).

It is increasingly being understood that because the processing of music is preserved in parts of the brain that frequently outlast other memory centres, music can help to reduce symptoms, manage challenging behaviours and enable deep emotional connections in people with dementia. Bearing this in mind the Freedom of Mind Community Choir will be holding Dementia Friendly Singalongs at the Camelon Parish Church Hall, Mansionhouse Rd, Camelon, Falkirk FK1 4LW on the following Wednesday's: 1st July, 30th September and 2nd December 2026 between 2.30 – 4.30 pm. All are welcome.

I hope you all have a good, relaxing and safe summer holidays. Let's hope we get some warm (but not too hot), rain free days.

Peter Kahan

A mindfulness thought

'Training your mind to be the present moment is the number one key to making healthier choices.'

Susan Albers

Interest Group Section

Scrabble Club

(By Peter Kahan)

How did you get on with finding the meanings of the five words I gave you in last month's Newsletter? Well, I hope, but in case you did not have time to investigate their meanings, please see these below taken from the Collins on-line English Dictionary:

ama – 'a Japanese diver, usually a woman, who tends underwater oyster beds used in the cultivation of pearls'

fave – 'Your fave thing or person of a particular type is the one you like the most.'

Largo – 'A largo is a piece of music, especially part of a longer piece that is played slowly.'

roke - 'to steam or smoke'

seel – 'to sew up the eyelids of (a hawk or falcon) so as to render it quiet and tame'

Your next word challenge

Here are a couple of word quiz questions for you to try.

What word can go after money, hat and ice?

What word can go before bath, hat and opener?

Film Group

(By John Giovanacci)

Later this month we will be watching the last film in the programme for 2025/26. I really do appreciate all the great feedback I get after showing a film and the selections this year have been very varied but as usual, I included one Hitchcock film, one foreign film, some old classics and some more up-to-date ones which tend to be lesser-known films.

Our last film will be the 1960 British comedy **School for Scoundrels** starring Ian Carmichael, Terry Thomas and one of my favourite comedy actors Alastair Sim.

I have started planning a programme for 2026/27 and already have a few great films lined up so just a reminder to anyone who wishes to join or rejoin the Film Group for 26/27 that you will need to register with me at the Open Meeting/Registration Day in September. There will be more information about the day in our next Newsletter in August.

Maths Teasers

(By Peter Kahan)

How did you find the maths teasers in the May edition of Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter I must confess that they were a bit harder than usual, so don't worry if you were not able to solve them. The questions and their solutions are given below.

Question 1

If the ratio of the sides of a cuboid is 2:3:5 and its volume is 810 cm^3 determine the length of the sides of the cuboid?

Solution

I find it best to use a bit of algebra to solve a problem like this. Let the length of the cuboid = l . Then the breadth = $\frac{3}{2}l = 1.5l$ and the height $\frac{5}{2}l = 2.5l$.

Thus, the volume of the cuboid = $l \times 1.5l \times 2.5l = 810$ or $3.75l^3 = 810$
 Or $l^3 = 810 \div 3.75 = 216$ or $l = 6\text{ cm}$

Thus, the length of the cuboid = **6 cm**, the breadth = $6 \times 1.5 = \mathbf{9\text{ cm}}$ and the height = $6 \times 2.5 = \mathbf{15\text{ cm}}$.

Question 2

Solve the following equation for x :

$$4^x + 2^x = 20$$

Solution

The trick to solving this type of problem is to get everything looking the same. Thus, $2^2 = 4$ so replace 4 in the above equation by 2^2 as follows:

$$(2^2)^x + 2^x = 20$$

This equation can be re-written if one follows the laws of indices as follows:

$$(2^x)^2 + 2^x = 20$$

Let $n = 2^x$ so the equation can be re-written as follows:

$$n^2 + n = 20 \text{ or } n^2 + n - 20 = 0$$

This is, of course, just a quadratic equation which can be factorised as follows:

$$(n + 5)(n - 4) = 0$$

Thus, $n = -5$ and $n = 4$ are the solutions to the quadratic equation although we can ignore $n = -5$ as it is negative. Thus, $n = 4$ is the correct solution. But, $n = 2^x = 4$ or $x = \mathbf{2}$

June Math Teasers

Here are two maths teasers for you to try over summer.

Question 1

Find the missing number (?) in the following array of numbers:

$$5 + 2 = 17$$

$$6 + 3 = 27$$

$$7 + 4 = 39$$

$$8 + 5 = 53$$

$$9 + 6 = ?$$

Question 2

The following question is taken from the 2024 NC5 Applications of Mathematics Examination Paper 2. A calculator may be used with this paper.

Emma worked overtime to earn some extra spending money.

Her basic rate of pay is £12.80 an hour.

She is contracted to work 37.5 hours per week. She is paid time-and-a-half for any overtime she works.

Last week Emma worked 5 days from 07:30 until 12:30. After a lunch break, she then worked from 13:00 until 17:30 on each of those 5 days.

Calculate how much Emma earned last week

THE INTERVIEW

In this month's interview Morven Mack gives us her answers to the same, now regular, 6 questions about herself. Morven volunteers at the Open Meetings to make sure everyone is suitably refreshed.



1. What was your first job and how much were you paid?

My first job on leaving school was as secretary to the M.D. of Edgar Vaughan Oil Specialists in Birmingham. I am actually unable to recall the level of pay but, given that this was in 1962, considerably less than today's anticipated wage. My pay certainly covered my 'dig money' and personal expenses so probably on a par with the times.

2. What is your favourite place to visit in Scotland?

This is a difficult question. I have a number of favoured locations depending on whether I am walking or visiting, I love anything with a sense of history. On this basis I offer Culross, Linlithgow and St Monans. I am keen to increase my knowledge of the north and Scottish islands.

3. If you were alone on a desert island, what piece of music and what book would you like to have with you?

I would probably take Three Tenors' as I enjoy opera and love Pavarotti, Domingo and Carreras. The book would be 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' by George Orwell. I am struck by how accurate his predictions have come to be.

4. Do you have any pets? Have you ever had any unusual ones?

At present I do not have any pets but, over the childhood years of my children I have had the company of cats, a dog, a hamster and mice and goldfish. Nothing too unusual though, thank goodness.

5. Tell us about one of your hobbies.

I have always enjoyed walking and hill climbing, though the latter is proving too arduous in recent years. I am a keen gardener and a member of Falkirk Writers Circle, Friends of Dollar Park and the Falkirk U3a history group, walking group and current affairs group.

6. Share something about yourself that not many people know.

Despite several attempts at learning over the years, I am unable to swim.

Gardening Tips for June/July

(By The Gardening Guru)

This spring, the azaleas and rhododendrons were particularly colourful, possibly due to the mild weather. However, Summer is now upon us and the mild but showery weather has certainly encouraged the plants in the garden to grow – including the weeds. Keep on top of the weeds by going round the borders with a hoe on a weekly basis if possible.

Now is the time to plant out your summer bedding. When buying plants at the garden centre, don't pick the ones with the beautiful blooms, select the plants with tight buds which will come out once they are in your garden.

Have you tried growing courgettes? Sow two or three seeds 1" (2.5cm) deep and 3 feet (90cm) apart. Once they have germinated, thin them out and only keep the strongest plants. Protect your brassicas from cabbage white butterflies by covering them with fine mesh.

Don't forget your indoor plants. They can be easily scorched by early morning sun. Give them a break by putting them outside while you have your holiday or ask a friend to water them regularly.

Enjoy the summertime.

The u3a Essay Competition 2026

Take us on a remarkable real-life journey—of discovery, adventure or transformation—and bring its story to life in fewer than 1000 words.

Who Can Enter?

All u3a members, including those in Interest Groups Online. You must be a member by 1st June 2026 and stay a member until winners are announced in October 2026.

Key Details:

- Free entry (one essay per person)
- Deadline: Submit by 12 noon, Friday 31 July 2025
- Prize books for the winner and two runners-up, donated by HX Expeditions.

All the competition rules can be found using this link

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/learning-activities/essay-competition-2026?fbclid=IwY2xjawSOdapleHRuA2FlbQIxMABicmlkETfRDJuM0RhBHhpTFdvWmdwc3J0YwZhcHBfaWQQMjlyMDM5>

Here is the link to submit your entry

<https://u3auk.wufoo.com/forms/u3a-essay-competition-2026>

