



Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter



June 2025

Editor – John Giovanacci – publicity@falkirku3a.uk

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

I do hope you enjoyed the warm, dry weather we had fairly recently. I was tempted to wear some shorts during this period, but I managed to resist the temptation in the end. The weather has not been so good of late with a mixture of rain, sunshine and wind, but at least the rain has been good for the garden.

I would like to thank Liz Allan for her fascinating account of The Devil's Porridge. The Government authorised the building of a series of factories near Gretna to increase the stock of munitions for the British Army in the First World War. At their peak the factories employed 30,000 people: 12,000 women and 18,000 men. When it came to health and safety the factories were sadly lacking especially for munitions works. Photographs Liz showed us revealed workers with no goggles, gloves or ear protection. I strongly suspect there were no Risk Assessments done at the factories. Much more information about the factories can be found on the following museum website:

<https://www.devilsporridge.org.uk/>.

As I mentioned briefly at the AGM, the 2024/25 Group Annual Review is well worth reading. You can find it at <https://falkirku3a.uk/index.php/about/documents>. Our groups have certainly been active over the last year. For example, the Coffee Morning group has found a new home at The Nutmeg Café within the grounds of Galaxy Sports, Little Kerse, Polmont. The group is open to all very much on a drop-in basis. You are not obliged to attend every group meeting. The Litter Picking group has been active at the Falkirk Stadium and at other locations. Each litter pick lasts about an hour and is followed by refreshments and a chat at a suitable venue. One look at the Science group and you will see how busy members of the group have been. There have been discussions on some fascinating topics such as: can AI make instruction and procedural manuals obsolete? Why have solar farms when roofs of new-build housing and industrial buildings can be used? And much more besides. There is much more interesting information in the 2024/25 Group Annual Review, and who knows, the information in the Review might just inspire you to try a new group in 2025/26.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a happy, healthy and relaxed summer. If you are going on holiday have a good time. I look forward to seeing you at our Registration Event on Tuesday 2nd September 2025.

Peter Kahan

A mindfulness thought

'If it's out of your hands, it deserves freedom from your mind too.'

Ivan Nuru

Interest Group News

Film Group

Here are the questions I posed in May Newsletter relating to films celebrating landmark anniversaries this year with the answers shown after each one.

50th anniversary – ‘you’re gonna need a bigger boat’ - **Jaws**

60th anniversary – directed by David Lean, starring Omar Sharif and Julie Christie – **Doctor Zhivago**

70th anniversary – Hitchcock film set in the French Riviera - **To Catch a Thief**

75th anniversary – Gloria Swanson plays a faded film star determined to make a triumphant return - **Sunset Boulevard**

We will be finishing off the season’s screenings later this month with one of the funniest films ever made, **Airplane!** With so many funny scenes and memorable lines surely this will be a great way to finish off for our summer break and ‘don’t call me Shirley’.

John Giovanacci

Scrabble Club

So, did you manage to separate out the words from the fakes? Let’s go through each of the ‘words’ I gave you to clarify which are words and which are not (sources Collins English Dictionary plus others).

Accismus – a word (‘a form of irony in which a person feigns indifference to or pretends to refuse something they desire’)

Alot – not a word (‘is a misspelling of the phrase a lot’)

Definately – not a word (‘is a common misspelling of the word definitely’)

Limerence – a word (‘a state of mind resulting from romantic attraction, characterized by feelings of euphoria, the desire to have one’s feelings reciprocated, etc.’)

Riposte – a word (‘a riposte is a quick, clever reply to something that someone has said’)

Sherbert – a variant of the word Sherbet, often considered a misspelling

Verisimilitude – a word (‘Verisimilitude is the quality of seeming to be true or real’)

Summer Challenge - As you may be aware, to play Scrabble well you need a wide vocabulary. What I would like you to do over the Summer is to come up with at least **10** uncommon words which will help to expand your and my vocabulary. Here are a few uncommon words to get you started:

Biblioklept, Ephemeral, and Serendipity.

All the best

Wanted - An Organiser for the Local History Group

If you are interested in taking on this role please contact the current organiser - Jennifer Kightley - localhistory@falkirk3a.uk

Group Organisers can work by themselves or share the role with others so that all the work doesn’t rest with one person.

The current organiser will continue to contribute to group activities for a further year and will give all possible support to whoever takes over.

Have a great summer and come back refreshed to take on a new challenge!

Maths Teasers

How did you get on with the May 2025 maths teasers? Hopefully you did not find them too difficult. The solutions to the two questions are shown below.

Question 1

$$A + B = 9$$

$$A - B = 5$$

What does the following equation equal? $A^2 + B^2 = ?$

Solution

Let's solve the two simultaneous equations shown above by adding them together

$$A + B = 9$$

$$A - B = 5$$

$$2A = 14$$

$$A = 7$$

Substituting $A = 7$ into the equation $A + B = 9$ gives $7 + B = 9$ or $B = 9 - 7 = 2$

Thus, $A^2 + B^2 = 7^2 + 2^2 = 49 + 4 = \mathbf{53}$

Question 2

Solve the following equation

$$\sqrt{x} + \sqrt{3} = \sqrt{27}$$

Solution

Let's start by moving $\sqrt{3}$ to the other side of the equation.

$$\text{Thus, } \sqrt{x} = \sqrt{27} - \sqrt{3}$$

$$\text{But } \sqrt{27} = \sqrt{9 \times 3} = \sqrt{9} \times \sqrt{3} = 3\sqrt{3}$$

$$\text{Thus, } \sqrt{x} = \sqrt{27} - \sqrt{3} = 3\sqrt{3} - \sqrt{3} = 2\sqrt{3}$$

$$\text{Thus, } \sqrt{x} = 2\sqrt{3}$$

Squaring both sides of this equations gives

$$x = 4 \times 3 = \mathbf{12}$$

June Maths Teasers

Here are a couple of problems for you to try over the summer. Solutions to these problems will appear in the next edition of the Newsletter.

Question 1

Find four consecutive odd numbers that add up to 160.

Question 2

The following question is taken from the 2024 Higher Applications of Mathematics Examination Paper. It involves compound interest. Calculators are allowed in this paper.

Eva deposited £4500 in a variable rate savings account on 1 January 2021.

The effective rates of interest for the savings account are as follows:

Dates	Interest Rate
1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021	0.415% per month
1 April 2021 to 31 December 2021	4.7% per year
From 1 January 2022	2.6% per year

Calculate Eva's balance on 1 January 2024.

The Kelpies on TV

You might be interested to know that our World-famous Kelpies are being featured on TV on Tuesday 17th June at 9.00 pm on More4. Matt Baker will be talking to the people dedicated to caring for them in his weekly show Matt Baker's British Isles.

Gardening Guru

A change in the weather from a very dry May. Suddenly everything in the garden is growing very quickly - including the weeds.

Now that the risk of frost is past, annuals grown from seed and bedding plants from the local garden centre can be planted out.

Tall perennials (plants that die down in winter and regrow again in spring) e.g. lupins, peonies, delphiniums should be staked to stop them from falling over in wind or rain.

This is the time to take softwood cuttings from shrubs such as buddleias and hydrangeas.

Collect non-flowering shoots and pop 4 or 5 cuttings into a small pot of compost. Covering the pot with a clear polythene bag will make its own propagator.

Keep sowing salad plants every few weeks to give a good supply of leaves throughout the summer. Feed tomatoes and peppers weekly once the fruit begins to develop.

And don't forget to sit in your garden on good days and enjoy all the work you have done.

