



Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter



October 2025

Editor – John Giovanacci – publicity@falkirku3a.uk

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

A very warm welcome to the October 2025 edition of the Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter. As you will undoubtedly know we recently experienced the high winds and heavy rain associated with Storm Amy. Let's hope this is the only storm of the winter, although regrettably I doubt this will be the case. I do hope you did not experience any damage to your property as a result of the Storm, and that you were safe while the Storm was happening.

What a very good talk and film we had from Gillian Millar from Cycling Without Age Scotland (CWAS) at the Open Meeting on 7th October. CWAS provide free trishaw rides for elderly and disabled people across Scotland, including Falkirk. For more information, please go to their website www.cwas.org.

Following a recent election, Sheila Crawley, a member of Ashbourne u3a, has been elected as the new Vice Chair of the Third Age Trust. In her supporting statement for the election, Sheila revealed her hopes for the u3a movement: "I'm passionate about u3a, it has a great social purpose. My hope is that many more people of all backgrounds understand what u3a is and how transformational it can be." I am sure these are sentiments we would all share.

You may recall that in last month's Newsletter I provided some details of the online groups offered by the u3a in Scotland. The National u3a also offers a wide range of online groups, examples of which include 3D Printing at Home, Bridge – Weekly Online Games, Chess Club, Family History Before 1538, Wine Appreciation and many more besides. To join a group, you must first be a paid member of Interest Groups Online. The annual membership fee is £12, covering the period from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026. For more details of the National u3a's Online Groups click on the following link <https://www.u3a.org.uk/learning/interest-groups-online#Browse>.

Here is a possible date for your 2026 diary: the u3a Festival 26, which takes place **1-3 July 2026** at the University of York. This is the second time this event has been held and will feature a wide range of activities, talks, workshops, exhibitions, sports tournaments and concerts. More details can be found at the following link: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/latest-news/u3a-festival-26>.

So, I think you can see that there are things to keep us active and to look forward to even as the nights draw in. I wish you a happy, safe and warm October and November.

Peter Kahan

A mindfulness thought

"To fall in love with yourself is the first secret to happiness."

Robert Morely

Interest Group News

New Groups

We have 3 new groups this session, which are:

- Cinema Group (Organiser: Ruth Morris)
- Construction Group (Organiser: Colin McNeil)
- Scottish Country Dancing Group (Organiser: Sandie Mathers)

Note: Scottish Country Dancing is not ceilidh dancing, which is much livelier, and the group welcomes all levels from complete novice upwards with a basic level of fitness similar to age-appropriate yoga or aerobics classes.

Further information about the new groups and all our other groups is of course available on our website.

Theatre Group 2?

Theatre Group 1, organised by Fiona and Isobel, is currently full and the other 11 members who have signed up have been placed on a waiting list. These members could become Theatre Group 2 if a group organiser could be found. I have emailed everyone on the waiting list to ask if any member(s) would be prepared to organise the group. So far, no-one has come forward.

I also included the names of everyone on the waiting list so that people might at least be able to identify a few other members they could attend the theatre with and therefore organise smaller, more manageable groups. Let me know if you need any help with contacting someone else on the waiting list.

Other Possible Groups

Ten pin bowling and badminton groups were suggestions put into our Suggestions Box at the registration meeting. If you would like to know of other members who would be interested in either of these activities, send me an email at groups@falkirk3a.uk and I'll put you in touch with anyone else who contacts me.

Groups' Coordinator: Dorothy Ferrie, at groups@falkirk3a.uk

Scrabble Club

Did you explore the meanings of the words the Scrabble Club recently discovered while playing Scrabble and identified in the September 2025 Newsletter? No problem if you did not as the meanings are shown below taken from the Collins English On-line Dictionary.

feese – 'to beat, to drive off'

Freon – 'any of a group of chemically unreactive chlorofluorocarbons used as aerosol propellants, refrigerants, and solvents'

jarl – 'a Scandinavian chieftain or noble'

pash – 'infatuation'

zex – 'a tool for cutting roof slates'

Here are two-word quiz questions for you to try this month.

What is unique about the following sentence: 'The public was amazed to view the quickness and dexterity of the juggler'?

What is the longest one-syllable word in the English language?

Maths Teasers

Did you try the two maths teasers in the September 2025 Newsletter? Were you able to solve them? Don't worry if you were not as the two questions are repeated and their solutions are shown below.

Question 1

Show that the fractional expression shown below can be simplified to $\frac{7}{17}$

$$\frac{\frac{4}{5} - \frac{1}{3}}{\frac{4}{5} + \frac{1}{3}} \quad \text{expression 1}$$

Solution

Let's start by simplifying the subtraction of the fractions on the top line of expressions 1 as follows:

$$\frac{4}{5} - \frac{1}{3} = \frac{12}{15} - \frac{5}{15} = \frac{7}{15}$$

Likewise, let's simplify the addition of the fractions on the bottom line of expression 1 as follows:

$$\frac{4}{5} + \frac{1}{3} = \frac{12}{15} + \frac{5}{15} = \frac{17}{15}$$

Expression 1 now becomes

$$\frac{\frac{7}{15}}{\frac{17}{15}}$$

Which can be simplified as follows:

$$\frac{\frac{7}{15}}{\frac{17}{15}} = \frac{7}{15} \div \frac{17}{15} = \frac{7}{15} \times \frac{15}{17} = \frac{7}{17}$$

Question 2

James travelled from Southampton to New York by ship. It took 180 hours to sail from Southampton to New York. The local time in New York is 5 hours behind the local time in Southampton. The ship arrives in New York at 04:00 on 18 November.

Calculate the date and local time that the ship left Southampton.

Solution

If the local time in New York is 04:00 on 18 November then it will be 09.00 on 18 November at Southampton as Southampton is 5 hours ahead of New York.

It takes 180 hours to travel between Southampton and New York which corresponds to $180 \div 24 = 7.5$ days.

Subtracting 7 days from the arrival time and date gives 09.00 on 11 November

Subtracting 12 hours from 09.00 on 11 November gives 21.00 (9.00 pm) on 10 November.

So the date and local time the ship departed Southampton was **10 November at 9.00 pm**.

October Math Teaser

Here are two new maths teasers for you to try in October 2025.

Question 1

Simplify the following expression

$$\frac{\sqrt{99} + \sqrt{99}}{\sqrt{11}}$$

Question 2

Here is another question taken from the most recent NC5 Applications of Mathematics examination paper. A calculator may be used.

Andy runs 3.4 miles in a time of 33 minutes.

Calculate Andy's average speed. Give your answer in kilometres per hour.

1 mile = 1.609 km

Gardening Guru

Now is the time to store or cover garden furniture for winter so it lasts longer. Any tender perennials should be lifted now and stored over winter in a cool frost free place such as a garage.

At this time of year you can take hardwood cuttings from forsythia, cornus and willow once the leaves have fallen. Take cuttings about 15cm(6ins) long and insert into deep pots filled with compost. Leave in a corner of the garden and you will have new shrubs for next year.

Don't be too tidy in the garden. Piles of prunings are great for wildlife like hedgehogs. Put up nest boxes for birds that will be looking for places to nest early in the new year or even for birds looking for a place to shelter overnight in winter.

Grow an amaryllis for Christmas. Plant in a pot in multipurpose compost leaving two thirds of the bulb above the surface. Leave in a warm, well-lit spot.

Cornus Midwinter Fire



Christmas Crafting

Toni Smillie will be holding a Christmas crafting session on the afternoon of Tuesday 18th November.

The intention is to make some macrame Christmas decorations.

Numbers will be limited so if you are interested, please email Toni at xmascrafting@falkirk3a.uk

There will be a charge of £2 towards the crafting materials.



Date For Your Diary

FALKIRK OLDER PEOPLES DAY 2025

AGE IS JUST A NUMBER
Celebrate, Connect, Discover

**Join us for a day dedicated to
the over 50's!**

**Discover a wealth of valuable
resources and services
tailored to older individuals,
all under one roof**

**WEDNESDAY
29TH OCTOBER 2025**

10AM - 2PM

**BRAVEHEART UNIT
HOWGATE CENTRE**



- ✓ Solicitors for Older People
- ✓ Falkirk Health and Social Care partnership
- ✓ Falkirk Council Welfare Benefits
- ✓ NHS Forth Valley
- ✓ Royal Voluntary Service
- ✓ Asda Healthy Eating
- ✓ Alzheimers Scotland

- ✓ Braveheart
- ✓ Age Scotland
- ✓ Foodtrain
- ✓ Dial-a-Journey
- ✓ Cycling Without Age
- ✓ And more.....



Older Peoples Network

FREE ENTRY – EVERYONE WELCOME

SCOTTISH U3A JAMBOREE

I attended the Scottish u3a Jamboree which was held at Edinburgh Napier University's Craiglockhart Campus on 29 August. It was a well organised event with lots of talks and workshops. There are plans to hold more Jamborees in the future at other locations.

The event was sold out, with over 300 members attending from all over Scotland participating in over 40 activities.

Vikki Kirby from Edinburgh u3a created a Jamboree Newsletter containing lots of information and photos from the day's events. You can find it by doing **Ctrl+Click** on this link: [Jamboree Newsletter](#)

The following advice and information are from two talks I attended.

AGEING WELL – ADVICE FROM AGE SCOTLAND

Ageing is affected by only 20-30% of your genes (source – the Open University). Taking up exercise in later life really does have health benefits. Keeping mentally fit by joining clubs (such as the u3a) also has positive benefits. Our environment also impacts our health, and ensuring we access good healthcare is also important.

Recommended ways of improving our wellbeing include:

- **Mindfulness** – listen to The Music & Meditation Podcast on BBC Sounds or join our own group that meets on Friday afternoons.
- **Breathing techniques** - ease episodes of stress by breathing in through your nose for a count of 4, then breathing out through your mouth for a count of 6.
- **Gratitudes** – these have been scientifically proven to promote a positive mindset. Keep a note of your positive and negative thoughts and feelings. Just writing these down can help you to feel better. You can try to find something positive to focus on each morning to start your day.
- **Connections** - having good relations with others really matters. Even interacting with strangers in a queue, on public transport or at the supermarket checkout can positively impact your mental wellbeing.
- **Movement** – muscle decline starts in our 30s and our sense of balance starts to decline in our 40s. Maintain your strength and your balance and raise your heart rate by exercising every day.
- **Diet** – avoid ultra processed foods – these are foods whose ingredients include a long list of things you wouldn't find in your kitchen. These ingredients only increase shelf life; they are not nutritious. Protein becomes more important as we age as it helps to maintain our muscles.
- **Drink** – your pee should not be darker than a pale-yellow colour. If it is, then you need to **drink** more. If it stays dark for three or more days, you should make an appointment to see your GP.
- **Brain stimulation** – use it or lose it! The u3a can help you here!

You can find out more at: www.agescotland.org.uk/

ALZHEIMER SCOTLAND

The Manager of the Alzheimer Scotland 24-hour helpline gave a talk outlining the advice and support available.

Their number is **FREEPHONE 0808 808 3000**

Their email address is helpline@alzscot.org

The helpline is governed by Health and Social Care standards. The standards of care for Dementia in Scotland are:

The right to a diagnosis

The right to be treated with respect

The right to access treatments

The right to one year's post diagnosis support

The right to independence

The right to carers who are educated about dementia

The right to end of life care

In the last 12 months 6232 people have called the helpline. The majority of calls (83%) are made by a carer, relative, or friend of someone living with dementia. Some calls are made by people concerned about their own memory.

The top 3 reasons for calls are

Seeking emotional support

Wanting information about dementia services

Wanting information about long-stay care

Dementia affects both men and women worldwide and is most common in older people, but it is not a natural part of ageing and does not affect everybody. There are more than one hundred types and people can have more than one type.

In Scotland, there are currently 90,000 people living with dementia and this number is expected to double in the next 20 years because people are living longer and baby boomers are reaching retirement age.

Ruth Morris