



Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter



October 2024

Editor – John Giovanacci – publicity@falkirku3a.uk

FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

A warm welcome to the October edition of the Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter. We do hope you enjoy the content of this Newsletter.

At the October Open Meeting we were treated to a very enjoyable and moving talk by Liz Allan. Liz's father, Alex, fought in North Africa and Italy during World War 2, and her talk was based around the many letters Alex wrote home to his beloved wife, Nan, during the war. Liz has had these letters, plus one from Nan, published as a book. Alex never wrote about any of the wartime activities he was involved in but wrote about everyday events away from the action and personal matters. During the talk Liz showed us a photograph of her father towards the end of the war. This clearly showed how much Alex had aged as a result of his wartime experiences. Alex was reunited with Nan after the war, but sadly died at the relatively young age of fifty due to a heart attack. I have been reflecting on this and was wondering how many men and women who served in the military during World War 2 lives were cut short due to their wartime experiences. Perhaps as we approach the Remembrance period, we should also give thought to such persons as well as those who have died in wars.

We were recently approached by a potential new member interested in playing Backgammon. Could any members interested in joining a Backgammon Group contact me (chair@falkirku3a.uk) so that we can get a Backgammon Group started. We would not be alone in such a venture as there is an u3a Backgammon Advisor in Ayr who can know doubt give us useful advice in starting a Backgammon Group.

During my opening comments at the Open Meeting on 1st October I indicated that the trustees were making slight changes to the Constitution to allow for greater flexibility as to who could be authorised signatories for the Falkirk and District u3a bank account. This was a mistake on my part as it is not the Constitution that will be changed, but rather the Financial Policy. I apologise for this mistake.

I hope you all have a good and healthy October.

Peter Kahan

Interest Group News

Film Group

The new session kicked off with a Hitchcock film from 1937 called **Young & Innocent** and although it is lesser known it has all his trademark style throughout with a man wrongly accused of murder going on the run and with the help of a young woman, they desperately attempt to find the real killer. This month's film is more modern, the very funny dark comedy starring David Tennant, Rosamund Pike and Billy Connolly called **What We Did on Our Holiday**.

I showed a short film called **The Winterkeeper** at the Open Meeting and for those who missed it or anyone who wants to watch it again here is the link

<https://youtu.be/9OwLLNPRbUw?si=RM7eHQMawR0Zuacy>

John Giovanacci

Photography Group

The photography group had their first meeting of the new session although we had been out during the summer to the Japanese Garden and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

We did a photo treasure hunt around Callendar Park and finished off with refreshments in the cafe (photo below). Our future meetings will be a tutorial by Jack Egdell, Summerlee Museum and Stirling for the Christmas lights.



Arlehne Stewart

Scrabble Club

Did you explore the meanings of the words in last month's Newsletter? Don't worry if you did not, as their meanings are shown below taken from the Collins English Dictionary.

eme – indicating a minimal distinctive unit of a specified type in a language

jake – satisfactory, all right

pinger - a device that makes a pinging sound, especially one that can be pre-set to ring at a particular time

snee – obsolete, to cut or thrust with a knife, especially when fighting

yurt - a circular tent consisting of a framework of poles covered with felt or skins, used by Mongolian and Turkic nomads of east and central Asia

zo - a Tibetan breed of cattle, developed by crossing a yak with common cattle

Here are some more words that have come up during Scrabble games which you might like to find the meanings of: *awa, doo, fere, mura, yod, zig*. The meanings of these words will be given in the next Newsletter.

Peter Kahan

Useful Health Information and Links

Dementia – what it is, how it is treated and how you can help.

At the Scottish u3a AGM, Dr Tom Russ of the University of Edinburgh, who works in Dementia research, gave a talk on the subject.

Dementia is an umbrella term for a range of progressive disorders affecting the brain and it is more common in people over 65 years old. Typically, symptoms are memory loss, confusion, problems with speech and understanding that get worse over time. As people continue to live longer more will be affected by this disease. It is estimated that, by 2025, over one million people in the UK will have a dementia diagnosis and almost all of us will know someone living with the condition.

The three drugs currently used to treat dementia in the UK only help to alleviate the symptoms and have been in place for over 20 years. Research has discovered that Dementia is caused by amyloid proteins in the brain clumping together around neurons, so current research is attempting to deal with this cause of dementia.

Two new drugs, lecanemab and donanemab, help to create antibodies that bind to the amyloid proteins and break up the clumps that cause dementia. However, only 5-15% of current dementia patients are eligible for this and more research is needed to improve treatment.

If you would like to help with this research, please go to:

<https://www.nhsresearchscotland.org.uk/research-areas/dementia-and-neurodegenerative-disease>

Information and advice on dementia can be found at: [Home - Dementia UK](#)

Tom Russ and his colleague Michael Huddleston have written a book called “**FAQs on Dementia**” that promises to answer all your questions on the subject.

Falls Prevention

Here is some useful information provided by Falkirk Health & Social Care Partnership with some practical tips for maintaining good balance and preventing falls.

<https://www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Health-and-wellbeing-forum-presentation.pdf>

Gardening Guru

This is the month of Halloween with ghouls and ghosts and pumpkin lanterns. Youngsters have it easy these days. I remember when you had to ‘howk’ out the inside of a turnip with a spoon to make your lantern and that was no easy task. I still remember the smell of the lantern when the candle was burning.

Parsnips can be left in the ground until after the first frosts when they will taste sweeter. The first frosts turn the flowers of summer bedding black so now is the time to clear your tubs and replace with winter and spring flowering plants. Cyclamens are on sale just now in the garden centres for autumn colour and pansies give some lovely winter colour. Now is also the time to plant snowdrop, crocus and daffodil bulbs for spring colour.

It is unlikely that any green tomatoes left in the greenhouse will turn red now. They can be used to make green tomato chutney or pick them and leave on a warm windowsill with a banana when they will slowly ripen.

Maths Teaser

How did you find the two maths teasers from last month? Not too difficult, I hope. Don't worry if you were not able to do the questions, as the questions plus solutions are shown below.

Question 1

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

Solution

We will start by adding the three $\sqrt{3}$'s together as shown below:

$$\frac{3\sqrt{3}}{\sqrt{27}} \quad \text{Equation (1)}$$

Next, we will simplify the $\sqrt{27}$ as follows

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

Substituting for $\sqrt{27}$ into equation (1) gives

$$\frac{3\sqrt{3}}{3\sqrt{3}} = 1$$

Question 2

$$\frac{(99^0 + 9^0)^5}{8} =$$

Solution

The hint to solving this problem is very important (i.e. a number raised to the power of 0 equals 1). Applying the hint gives us

$$\frac{(1 + 1)^5}{8} = \frac{2^5}{8} = \frac{32}{8} = 4$$

Problem

This month's problem, which was given to me by a good friend, is a little different from any I have included in the Newsletters previously. It can be solved mathematically or in any other way you wish. If you attempt the problem practically, please don't spill any water as you won't get the answer you are looking for.

You have the following three water jugs: an 8-litre jug full of water and two smaller empty jugs, one 5 litres in size and the other 3 litres in size. None of the three water jugs have any markings on them, and you do not have access to any devices which can measure volume. Your task is to divide the 8 litres of water equally between two friends, so that each gets 4 litres of water. Please demonstrate how you can do this with the three jugs. All the very best.