



Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter



Summer 2026

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FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

A very warm welcome to the 2026 summer edition of the Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter. I do hope you have had a good summer so far and have enjoyed the mostly nice, warm weather we have experienced (whilst, of course, avoiding getting sun burnt). If you have been away somewhere else in Britain or abroad, I hope you had a good, relaxing holiday.

It's amazing how quickly the summer has gone by, and it will soon be time for you to re-register with the Falkirk and District u3a. Registration will take place, as normal, on Tuesday, 1st September 2026 at St. Francis Xavier's Church Hall, Hope Street, Falkirk. The Registration Fee remains the same at £20. Please can I encourage those of you that are able to register on-line and either pay by BACs transfer or pay cash on the Registration Day. The online form is available from our membership page <https://falkirku3a.uk/index.php/membership>. If you are re-registering, it normally only takes a few minutes to complete the process, and it will save you having to fill-in a registration form on the day. Even if you do register and pay on-line do feel free to come along on Registration Day to meet with your u3a friends over tea/coffee and biscuits and select the groups you are going to be in this year.

The trustees are currently making preparations for the Registration Day. If you have any ideas for new groups, please let us know so we can include information about them in the publicity material we produce for the Registration Day.

Just a reminder that u3a members can access a wide range of free online talks, workshops and courses as part of being a member of the u3a. The majority of sessions are led by fellow u3a members who share their expertise. There are also additional talks by notable speakers and organisations. Talks available include the Scottish colourist on Iona, Laughter yoga, Wild, edible autumn seeds, and Exploring world faiths. More details can be found by clicking on the following link: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events>.

I very much look forward to catching up with you on Registration Day if you are able to attend.

A mindfulness thought

"The mind is just like a muscle - the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets and the more it can expand."

Idowu Koyenikan

Interest Group Section

Tenpin Bowling

(By Jan Livingstone)

The group took a break during the school holidays however one of our members, Jack E. made good use of the spare time to get creative with a prize he was awarded at one of our game days. The prize was a kit containing four sheets of thin plywood with the shapes pre-cut, ready to be pressed out. The instructions were to start with piece No.1 and attach the other pieces in numerical order all the way up to 90. They slotted together without glue. It took Jack a couple of nights to complete it, but he found it was quite therapeutic and challenging. Here is Jack's owl which I think you'll agree is very impressive.



Scrabble Club

(By Peter Kahan)

How did you get on with the word challenge in the June 2026 Newsletter? Well, I hope, but in case you have not been able to manage it, or had time to do it, answers are shown below.

What word can go after money, hat and ice?

Box

What word can go before bath, hat and opener?

Tin

Did you think of any other words? Please let me know.

Your next word challenge

Do you have difficulties thinking of any words beginning with z? I know I do. Here are five words beginning with z which you might want to explore the meanings of:

zax, zappy, zazen, zestful and zillion.

One-off Events

(By Jan Livinstone)

Axe Throwing

On the 12th of June 4 members had their first Axe Throwing experience. Our instructor, John, was very helpful in guiding us to obtain best stance and giving us encouragement. Big thanks to John at <https://www.gameofthrowing.co.uk/game-of-throwing-stirling>

We all enjoyed it very much and had time for 2 competitions.

The winner of the 2 handed throw was John G. with a score of 26 out of 40.

The winner of single handed was Mary F. with an even more impressive 46 out of 50.



Archery at the Falkirk Wheel

On the 6th of July a group of members spent a pleasant afternoon trying their skills at Archery. We all enjoyed the experience, and everyone would be happy to try again.



Group Organisers' Afternoon Tea

The Group Organisers met at Klondyke Garden Centre in Polmont for Afternoon Tea on Thursday 16th July. Seated at two tables with a lovely array of sandwiches, cakes and scones, everyone had an enjoyable time.



Interest Groups for 2026/27

(By Dorothy Ferrie, Groups' Organiser)

Information Updates

We are currently updating the information we have on our Interest Groups so that we can hand out an up-to-date flyer at this year's Registration Meeting on 1st September. Group organisers are also reviewing the information about their groups on the website.

Importance of Interest Groups

Interest groups are the lifeblood of our u3a, and we really appreciate the contribution of all of our Group Organisers. We very much want to maintain our current groups and, ideally, add some new groups too.

Who runs the Interest Groups?

The u3a is an organisation run by members for members, and we can only offer interest groups when we have members who are prepared to organise, or even to assist in organising a group.

The u3a Trust (our parent organisation) points out that the organisation and workload of a group need not fall solely on the shoulders of one group organiser, but that it can be shared with a deputy/buddy, or indeed with the other members of the group. All of the group members can therefore play their part in keeping the group going.

Interest Groups in search of organisers

- Louise Westall has now stepped down as organiser of the Family History Group.
- Jennifer Kightley has now stepped down as organiser of the Local History Group.

Louise and Jennifer have done an excellent job of running these popular groups and we thank them for all the work they have done.

We are now looking for an organiser (or organisers) for these groups and Louise and Jennifer have both kindly offered to provide advice to any member(s) prepared to do so.

We will have a sign-up sheet available for both groups at the Registration Meeting, and we will ask those who are interested whether they would be prepared to organise, or help to organise, their group.

Thinking of setting up an interest group?

If you are thinking about setting up a group, we'd love to hear from you and can give you any help you need to do so.

If you are unsure, you could offer to set up a group for a limited period and see how you get on. If you're not sure what the demand would be for your group, it could be listed on the 2026/27 Groups' Flyer, and we could see what the response would be.

We still think that a Board Games Group would be popular and have had one or two people enquiring about this. Contact me at the link below, or at the Registration Meeting, if you would be interested in a group like this.

Interest Groups' Contact

Get in touch with Dorothy Ferrie at groups@falkirku3a.uk with any queries relating to the above.

Maths Teasers

(By Peter Kahan)

Have you had an opportunity to attempt the maths teasers in the June edition of Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter? Don't worry if you have not had time to solve the two problems as the questions and their solutions are given below.

Question 1

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

$$5 + 2 = 17$$

$$6 + 3 = 27$$

$$7 + 4 = 39$$

$$8 + 5 = 53$$

$$9 + 6 = ?$$

Solution

This is the kind of question you might find in an IQ test. It is just a matter of experimenting with different relationships until you find the right connections between the different lines shown in the equations above.

So, for example, $5 \times 2 = 10$ and $10 + 7 = 17$; $6 \times 3 = 18$ and $18 + 9 = 27$; $7 \times 4 = 28$ and $28 + 11 = 39$. This suggests that we need to multiply the two numbers together and then add 7 then 9 then 11. If we follow this logic through the answers to the fourth line should be $8 \times 5 = 40$ and $40 + 13 = 53$, which indeed it is. So for the fifth line $9 \times 6 = 54$ and $54 + 15 = 69$.

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

Solution

The first step to solve this problem is to work out how many hours Emma works during last week. The question tells us that Emma works between 07:30 and 12:30 in the morning.

$12.30 - 07.30 = 5$ hours. So last week Emma works $5 \times 5 = 25$ hours in the mornings.

In the afternoon Emma works between 13.00 and 17.30. $17.30 - 13.00 = 4.5$ hours. So last week Emma works $4.5 \times 5 = 22.5$ hours in the afternoons.

The total number of hours worked by Emma last week was $25 + 22.5 = 47.5$ hours

The amount of overtime worked by Emma last week was $47.5 - 37.5 = 10$ hours

Emma earned the following amount last week = $37.5 \times 12.80 + 10 \times 12.80 \times 1.5 = \text{£}672$

Please note that the 1.5 reflects the fact that Emma is paid time-and-a-half for any overtime she works.

September Math Teasers

Here are two maths teasers for you to try over August/September.

Question 1

Perform the following calculation without using a calculator.

$$99^2 + 1$$

Question 2

This question is taken from the 2022 SQA Applications of Mathematics Paper 1 (Non-calculator).

Tracy decides to walk to the top of Dumyat Hill from Blairlogie car park. The horizontal distance between these two places is 3 kilometres. Blairlogie car park is 21 metres above sea level. The top of Dumyat Hill is 420 metres above sea level.

Calculate the average gradient between the Blairlogie car park and the top of Dumyat Hill. Give your answer as a fraction in its simplest form.

Remembering 2 stars we have lost

(by John Giovanacci)

As you all probably know I am a massive film fan and I feel I must pay tribute to 2 great talents, who starred in films I have shown to my Film Group but have sadly passed in the last few weeks.

Sam Neill -a fine actor who is well known for all the many great films he appeared in, including *The Dish* which is the only film I have ever shown twice to the Group, testament to how good a film I think it is. Another excellent film is *Dean Spanley* which I showed in November last year where Sam plays the title character alongside Peter O'Toole, Jeremy Northam and Bryan Brown. Sam sadly passed on 13th July aged 78

Glen Hansard – an Irish singer-songwriter who rose to fame when he starred in the 2007 romantic musical drama *Once* which is a favourite film of mine and which I showed to the Group in October 2023. The song Falling Slowly, which he wrote with co-star Marketa Irglova, won the Oscar for best song which you see them sing together in a music shop in the film's outstanding scene. Glen died in a tragic motorbike accident last month aged just 56. I watched his funeral on 4th August which was streamed live to his many fans worldwide.

