



Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter

February 2024

Editor – John Giovanacci

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FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

February is a month for celebrations. Tuesday just past, the 13th February, was Shrove Tuesday. The small pancakes with butter and jam or larger version with banana, maple syrup and cream are delicious but, oh dear, not very good for the waistline. Of course, the following day, 14th February, was Ash Wednesday and that was the start of Lent so, perhaps I would be more restrained in my eating habits in the run up to Easter. Not one bit of it. Although it was the start of Lent, it was also Valentine's Day. The price of flowers always rockets around that date so a lovely box of chocolates might be an alternative.

This month is also Chinese New Year which fell on Saturday, February 10th and celebrations culminate with the Lantern Festival on February 24th. This is the year of the wood dragon which is said to foster progress, growth, and abundance. We wish all our Chinese friends a Happy New Year.

As you will be aware, Susan Crisp has retired from the committee as membership secretary but has continued to maintain the database of members. We thank her for all the good work she has done while in the post and hope that her health improves.

We welcome Toni Smillie, a new member, who has agreed to take over the post of membership secretary.

We are still looking for members to replace present committee members who will be standing down at the AGM in June. Could you help us out by volunteering?

May you all continue to LEARN, LAUGH, LIVE with Falkirk & District u3a.

Louise Westall

Interest Group News

Film Group

Our January film showing had a great turnout, including two asylum seekers, specially invited for this showing of old time classics, and we all enjoyed the hilarious antics of Laurel & Hardy in a short film called **Busy Bodies** and then a Buster Keaton favourite, **Steamboat Bill Jr**, which, coincidentally, is going to be shown at The Hippodrome in Bo'ness on Saturday 23 March at 11.00 am if any other members are interested in seeing this very funny silent film.

This month we'll be watching an Australian film called **The Dish**, starring Sam Neill, which gives a true(ish) account of the part that a remote community, populated by quirky characters, played in transmitting live footage of the first Moon landing in 1969.

John Giovanacci

Family History

Last month the group looked at old prison records. It was interesting to read that one boy of only 11 years of age was imprisoned & given only bread & water for 30 of the 60 days of his imprisonment in The Bridewell, Edinburgh's prison. Another 15 year old was sentenced to 7 years & sent to Van Diemen's Land, now Tasmania. In 1715, one man was 'scourged through the town (Auchinleck) by the hand of the hangman' for sheep stealing. His man servant, although charged with sheep stealing, was allowed to go free.

Reading Group

Although we have a Reading Group listed on our website, unfortunately it is not active at the moment. Some of the members who were signed up to this group, however, have expressed an interest in starting it up again.

The group would need some organisational structure but it doesn't have to be the responsibility of only one person.

If there is reasonable interest, I'll arrange a meeting to talk about the possibilities.

If you wish to take part, please contact me by the end of February and give your preference for a meeting - face-to-face or on Zoom.

Jennifer Kightley - Groups Co-ordinator

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Maths Teaser

How did you get on with the Maths Teaser in the January Newsletter? Well, I hope. There was quite a lot of information in the question which you had to interpret and apply correctly if you were going to get the correct answer. The question involves applying good old fashion problem solving skills to a practical problem. The question plus solution is shown below.

Question

Paul is buying a new TV. It is advertised at a price of £825. He decides to use a payment plan to buy the TV. The total cost of the TV using the payment plan is £845.80.

The payments are calculated as follows

- deposit of $\frac{1}{5}$ th of advertised price
- 8 equal monthly instalments
- final payment of £100

Calculate the monthly instalment.

Solution

Let's start by calculating the deposit on the TV. This can be found as follows:

$$\text{Deposit} = £825 \times \frac{1}{5} = £165$$

Let the monthly instalment = X

Then the problem can be expressed as follows:

$$£165 + 8X + £100 = £845.80$$

Or

$$8X + £265 = £845.80$$

Or

$$8X = £845.80 - £265 = £580.80$$

Or

$$X = \frac{£580.80}{8} = £72.60$$

This month's question is taken from the SQA 2015 Lifeskills Mathematics Paper 1 (Non-Calculator) and involves tolerances. A calculator is not allowed. All the best.

Problem

A company orders a batch of washers with a thickness of 2.4 ± 0.05 mm. A quality control inspector takes a sample from the batch of washers. The thicknesses, in mm, of the washers in this sample are shown below.

2.44, 2.37, 2.36, 2.45, 2.35, 2.35, 2.44, 2.43, 2.34, 2.40, 2.40, 2.41, 2.39, 2.38, 2.46, 2.41, 2.39, 2.53, 2.36, 2.37

For the batch to be accepted, at least 88% of the washers in this sample must be within tolerance. Will the batch be accepted?

Summer School 2024

u3a in Scotland have now finalised the programme for the Summer School 2024 which will take place between Tuesday 20th and Thursday 22nd August at the Stirling Court Hotel, University of Stirling. There are 6 courses on offer this year and details are as follows: -

Creative Craft: *producing a fabric picture.*

A hands-on workshop to learn the skills needed to produce 3-D fabric pictures. You will make a colourful framed picture to take home. (There is a £10 charge for materials.)

Strolling to admire nature.

Leisurely walks to explore the beautiful environment of Stirling University for those who enjoy, and want to learn more about, the fauna, flora, and wildlife around us.

Technology: *how our household appliances are programmed.*

A hands-on introduction to programming everyday devices that is informative, simple, and fun. You will be supplied with a small, computerised card to use with your own laptop or tablet during the workshop and afterwards at home. (There is a charge of £20 for the card.)

Play writing: *creating characters.*

In this workshop you'll have the opportunity to create unique and memorable new characters, working with others to tell their stories and bring them to life. No writing experience is necessary.

Drug discovery: *where our medicines come from.*

This workshop will chart the drug discovery process from antiquity to the present day and highlight the profound impact these endeavours have had on human health.

Drawing Skills.

The aim of this workshop is to have fun whilst improving our drawing skills. We will be drawing from life and from photographs, learning to observe form, tone and texture in a relaxed atmosphere.

Booking details here -

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/f/falkirk/docs/u3ainscotlandssbookingnotes.pdf>

Course details and tutors here -

<https://u3asites.org.uk/files/f/falkirk/docs/summerschoolcourses-synopses.pdf>

Gardening Guru

Have you bought your seed potatoes yet? Garden centres are now full of them. Do remember to keep your egg boxes for chitting the potatoes. Mid to the end of February is the time to start sowing your seeds in the greenhouse so you have a vibrant floral display in summer and a good crop of vegetables in the autumn.