



## Falkirk and District U3A Newsletter

January 2020



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### From the Chair

I wish a happy New Year to all of our members.

The start of yet another decade is upon us, and it is a good opportunity to reflect on the past and anticipate the future. Our U3A was formed in March 2015, and since then we have increased our membership to 140 and have 26 active interest groups. I think this is pretty good going in under 5 years and is testament to the hard work put in, to make our U3A a success. One of the highlights of the past year has been to have our application to become a charity (SCIO) approved, and this should enable us to benefit over the long term.

Looking ahead June 3rd 2020 is a major date for all U3A's as it is the first national U3A day to celebrate the learning, activity and fun that happens every day in U3As across the country.

Copied from the U3A national website :

“We hope this day will help to challenge negative perceptions of older adults and will bring together all Third Agers in the community to learn about the contribution U3A makes to the quality of life for retired people”.

We do not currently have firm plans for how Falkirk and District U3A will participate in the celebrations, but I would be very keen to hear from anybody who wishes to make a contribution, as it is an excellent opportunity to increase awareness.

Glenn Merrett - Chairman

### Garden Visits Group

Thanks to Maureen Stone for updating us on the Group's latest visit.

On Wednesday November 27<sup>th</sup> a few members of the Garden Visits Group visited the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh to enjoy the festive lights. We were lucky; the evening was dry and calm, ideal for seeing the details of the trees and shrubs lit up, the miniature boats on the lakes and balls on the meadow with ever changing colours, one of the oldest glasshouses with a light display of its own accompanied by song and the house at the highest point of the gardens with a short film showing on its facade. You can see Edinburgh Castle from this point so we were disappointed that it was not lit up. We watched 'insects' of green light dance about us and into the shrubs – you just couldn't catch them! A really interesting evening in good company. (Photos courtesy of Allan Williams)



## Dinner Club

The outing to Glasgow was a huge success with the group taking in the City Centre, sparkling with all the Christmas Lights, before heading to No.29 The Square for their Christmas meal.



Some of the Group in Princes Square

## The Strummers

Back by popular demand The Strummers entertained members at the Christmas open meeting on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Here they are playing one of their fantastic set of popular songs.



At the request of the band, instead of payment, a donation was sent to Strathcarron Hospice. Thank you to all the members who donated prizes to the Tombola and a particular thanks to those members who helped in the kitchen and in the background to make this a successful afternoon.

## Lunch Group

The Group held a very successful lunch at the Gambero Rosso on 10<sup>th</sup> December with 18 members in attendance, despite the horrible weather that day. As usual the food and the service received was excellent.

The next lunch will be at the Stables in Stenhousemuir on 14<sup>th</sup> January at the usual time 12.00 for 12.30 Danny informed members of the Group by email prior to the Christmas festivities and he requires a reply before the 7<sup>th</sup> January.

A visit to the Tea House in Larbert has been arranged for the second Tuesday in February, members are asked to take a note of this date because there are conditions attached to this Venue.

## The Welcome Café Project

Being a Volunteer with Falkirk's Mental Health Association (FDAMH) I would like to highlight their latest initiative called The Welcome Café. It's all about getting people chatting and, for some, creating everyday opportunities to reduce feelings of loneliness.

The Welcome Café Community provides a space for people in cafés and restaurants to strike up a conversation with someone they don't know. It might be for five minutes while you drink a quick tea or coffee, or an hour of good conversation, it's entirely up to you!

We're not trying to build friendships – just simple, spontaneous chat to create beneficial social contact and to maybe have a big impact on someone's day.

Here's how it works

We know that people can be reluctant to ask to share a table if the café is busy, and they may even leave if they cannot have a table to themselves.

Welcome Cafés overcome this by offering the option to pop a simple 'Happy to Share' card on your table so that others can join you if they like.

Some cafés insert the card in their menu, others have cards displayed at the till for you to pick up and some cafés put out cards on a couple of tables that are clearly nominated for people who don't mind sharing and are up for a chat!

It is important to remember customers choose to take part only if they want to.

Participating cafés and restaurants are contributing to the local community, encouraging good mental health and may even benefit from an increase in customers!

We support Welcome Cafés by supplying the cards and materials and by working with them and listening to them to help the scheme flourish.

How to find a Welcome Café

Look out for Welcome Café posters and table cards at your favourite place for a cuppa. Find a list of participating cafés in Falkirk here <https://www.fdamh.org.uk/welcomecafe/falkirk/>

Volunteer with the Welcome Café

It is important to look after our Welcome and evaluate how the scheme is working out. For this we use the help of volunteers!

Our Welcome Café volunteers...

- Visit participating cafés
- Keep cafés topped up with Welcome Café literature and resources
- Strike up a rapport with staff as their feedback is crucial to achieve successful outcomes
- Observe what is happening on the ground
- Regularly feedback comments and suggestions to the project coordinator

This is a varied role and would suit those looking for regular volunteering with flexible times or options for weekend volunteering.

If you would like to help support this great community initiative please contact **Jim Thompson at FDAMH (01324 671600)** or visit FDAMH's Volunteering Page.

John (Editor)

## Newsround

As well as our own Newsletter there is also one issued each quarter by U3A in Scotland. You can find out about the New Trustee for Scotland and get a flavour of what is happening in other Scottish U3As in this link to the latest edition [Autumn Newsletter](#)

There is also a National Newsletter issued monthly and you can find out all the latest news and information from U3A UK here [December Newsletter](#)

## **Diary Dates – January**

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Fire & Light 2020 Visions at The Helix Park from 4.30 pm to 10.00 pm

An amazing array of performances and interactive installations of fire & light.

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>

Open Meeting in St Francis Xavier Church Hall @ 2.30pm with guest speaker.

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>

Robert Burns was born on this day in 1759. The first Burns supper in The Mother Club in Greenock was held on what was thought to be his birthday on 29 January 1802; in 1803 it was discovered from the Ayr parish records that the correct date was 25 January 1759. Burns Nights are now celebrated all around the World to remember his inspirational body of poetry and unforgettable lyrics.