



Falkirk and District u3a Newsletter

January 2024

Editor – John Giovanacci

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FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Members,

A Happy New Year to all members. There was a good turnout of members at the first Open Meeting of the year when we were regaled with tales from behind bars. Through his experience as a prison governor, Ian Gunn gave us an interesting and often amusing insight into life in some of Scotland's prisons. A most enjoyable talk.

Next month's Open Meeting on the 6th February, will see us transported away to foreign shores. We hope to have Archie McIntyre taking us to places like London, New York and even Sydney on his computer flight simulator. Perhaps we will visit places which have warmer climates than we have.

However, the number of hours of daylight are increasing which makes me think it won't be too long until we see the end of winter.

In June a number of committee members will be retiring, and we will be looking for new members. If we have insufficient committee members, our u3a will not be viable. Joining the committee would give you an opportunity have your say on the future of Falkirk & District u3a. Why don't you speak to a committee member and come along to one of the committee meetings in the next few months to find out what being a committee member involves.

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

Louise Westall

Obituary

We were saddened to hear of the death of Sandra McGregor. She was instrumental, along with others, in setting up Falkirk & District u3a and was our very first Chairperson. She was very active as a committee member until 2020 and was organiser for the Philosophy group for some years before giving up to look after her husband, Graham. Her funeral is at 12.15pm on Friday 26th January at Falkirk Crematorium. Our thoughts are with all her family at this sad time.

Useful Helpline



Christmas/Winter Open Meeting

Despite the foul weather, there was a good turnout for the Christmas/ Winter Open Meeting. A jolly atmosphere prevailed as members got themselves a cuppa and enjoyed some festive nibbles and chat.

Local singer and guitarist Willie Treeby entertained everyone with some Christmas songs as well as some popular sing-along ones. Then it was time to top up the cuppas and grab another mince pie before the raffle was drawn. The top prize of a bottle of Bailey's Irish Cream went to Janette Stevenson and thanks go to everyone who generously donated to the raffle.

There was quite a bit of hilarity as well as some good teamwork, when everyone had a go at making a Christmas angel decoration. This activity was organised by arts and crafts guru Louise, and the person who was fastest to follow her excellent instruction sheet and produce a decent version of the sample angel was the winner. Surprisingly, (or maybe not, given his technical skills) the winner was George Love. Well done, George, there is no end to your talents, and now's the time to announce your intention to set up a new arts and crafts group!

Although Louise had organised the craft activity and all the food for the meeting, she was unable to attend and to chair the meeting as she was ill and having to spend some time in hospital. On hearing this, members expressed their concern and Janice Macfarlane kindly organised a collection so that flowers could be sent to Louise, who has been very touched by the gesture and thanks everyone for their kindness. Thanks also go to all of those who helped things to run smoothly on the day, with thanks going to Archie McIntyre who collected all food and craft materials from Louise's house and chaired the meeting. Thanks also go to Jennifer Kightley who organised the craft activity.

The meeting finished with a festive "Parting Shot" from Archie who also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2024.

Interest Groups News

Scrabble Club

Did you know the meanings of the words in last month's Newsletter? Don't be concerned if you did not, because their meanings according to the Collins English Dictionary are as follows

arti – a ritual performed in homes and temples in which incense and light, typically from an oil lamp, is offered to a deity.

coir – is a rough material made from coconut shells which is used to make ropes and mats.

Han – a river in E central China, rising in S Shaanxi and flowing southeast through Hubei to the Yangtze River at Wuhan. Length about 1450 km (900 miles).

jow – the ringing, tolling, or sound of a bell.

scat – is a type of jazz singing in which the singer sings sounds rather than complete words.

Here are some more words from Scrabble Club games which you may wish to find the meanings of: *azine, bruin, divo, eard, hox, wan.*

Film Group

We thoroughly enjoyed watching The Wizard of Oz which I can recommend as the perfect film for Christmas time. This month we are going even further back into the days of cinema with an early Laurel & Hardy short called Busy Bodies which was made in 1933 and then for the main feature a classic Buster Keaton film from 1928 called Steamboat Bill Jr.

John

Coffee Morning Group

The Coffee Morning Group has a new Organiser as of January 2024. Susan Crisp has taken over this role. Thank you, Susan. You can find out about the Coffee Morning Group and indeed all the active groups on the Group pages of the website. Contact details of the Organisers are also available there.

On the Grapevine

I heard through the grapevine that there is a member out there who is interested in taking on the **Lunch Group** but I don't have a name! If that's you or you know who it is, please contact me. I may have something of interest for you/them.

Jennifer Kightley - jenniferkightley@gmail.com

Gardening Guru

If you had hyacinths flowering at Christmas, don't just throw them away after flowering, pop them into a space in the garden and you will have them flowering for spring of next year. Give your greenhouse and shed a clean out on a milder day. Check that your secateurs are clean and give them a drop of oil ready for the new season ahead.

What The F**kirk?

Alan Bissett, writer, performer, and Bairn, asks the most vital question of our age. *What is Fawkurt aw about?*

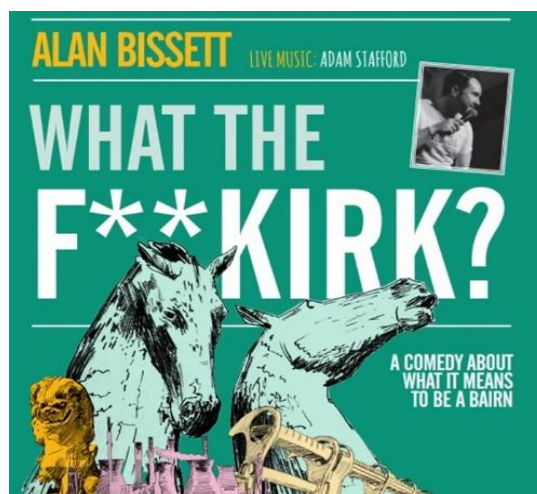
His research has been exhaustive. He's eaten numerous bar lunches in *Behind the Wall*. He's searched in the archives at Callendar House for ancient scribbles by Shire fans. He's interviewed drunken punters in the queue for City, asking: *what does it mean to come from Falkirk? What does it mean to come from anywhere?* Now he's ready to present his findings.

Join Alan and Falkirk musician Adam Stafford on a comical, musical, magical mystery tour through the past and present of an unremarkable, post-industrial Scottish town that's *definitely not Stirling!*

This exciting new show runs from Monday 22nd till Tuesday 30th January

Venues and booking details here:

https://www.falkirkleisureandculture.org/arts/community-events/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign&utm_content=ap_k4plnw3hvk



Maths Teaser

Did you find time to solve the two mathematics problems over the holiday? They were a bit trickier than usual involving the transposition of formula and surds. These are two subjects often dreaded by pupils. Don't worry if you were not able to solve the problems as the solutions are shown below.

Problem

Q.1 Change the subject of the formula $D = \frac{B+4}{C^2}$ to B .

Solution

Multiply both sides of the equation by C^2 as shown below

$$DC^2 = B + 4$$

Take 4 to the other side of the equation so that B becomes the subject of the formula as shown below

$$DC^2 - 4 = B$$

Or

$$B = DC^2 - 4$$

Q.2 Expand and simplify $\sqrt{10}(\sqrt{10} - \sqrt{2}) + 8\sqrt{5}$

Solution

This question involves manipulating surds. Surds are what are known as irrational numbers, which are numbers that cannot be represented by a fraction.

Expand the brackets

$$\sqrt{10} \times \sqrt{10} - \sqrt{10} \times \sqrt{2} + 8\sqrt{5}$$

$$\text{Now } \sqrt{10} \times \sqrt{10} = 10 \text{ and } \sqrt{10} \times \sqrt{2} = \sqrt{10 \times 2} = \sqrt{20}$$

So the equation becomes

$$10 - \sqrt{20} + 8\sqrt{5} \quad \text{equation (1)}$$

Now consider $\sqrt{20}$ which can be expressed as follows:

$$\sqrt{20} = \sqrt{4 \times 5} = \sqrt{4} \times \sqrt{5} = 2\sqrt{5}$$

We can now replace the $\sqrt{20}$ in equation (1) by $2\sqrt{5}$ as shown below

$$10 - 2\sqrt{5} + 8\sqrt{5}$$

Which leads to the final solution

$$10 - 6\sqrt{5}$$

This month's question is taken from the 2019 National 5 Applications of Mathematics (non-Calculator) Examination Paper so you should not use a calculator when solving the question. All the best.

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

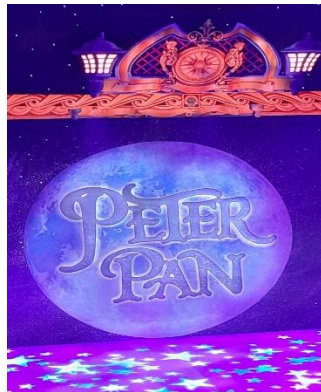
- deposit of $\frac{1}{5}$ th of advertised price
- 8 equal monthly instalments
- final payment of £100

Calculate the monthly instalment.

Peter Kahan (peterkahan@hotmail.com)

PHOTO GALLERY

Theatre Group 1 – Night at the Panto



Christmas/Winter Open Meeting

