

Tiverton u3a Newsletter

learn, laugh, live

Volume 10 Issue 5

April / May
2025



GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 24th April
10.00 for 10.30am

Lewis Paterson, General Manager of Knightshayes Court,
Will give an update on what is happening at Knightshayes and Old Blundells

Tea, coffee, biscuits and paper newsletters as usual

Moorhayes Community Centre, Lea Road, Tiverton EX16 6SU

And for our next meeting.....

On Thursday 22nd May
Jake Rainbow from

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

The UK's largest independent producer of official statistics relating to the economy, population and society. They also conduct the census in England and Wales every 10 years

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Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/tivertonu3>

Tiverton u3a welcomes two new members this month:

Liz Wiacek

Amanda Ellis

FROM THE COMMITTEE

Newsletter Publication Date

Since the newsletter is usually published on or around the 20th of each month, it often includes events happening in two contiguous months. In order to reflect this, and avoid confusion, the newsletter title from now on will reflect two months (eg April/May). The newsletter will, however, continue to be published online and on paper once per month.

March Meeting

For our March Meeting an audience of almost 80 was treated to a presentation by Dr Karen Stead-Dexter and her three “accomplices”, who just happened to be birds of prey, a Barn Owl, Eagle-owl and a Kestrel. The subject covered, “Animal & Nature Connection for Well-being” left the whole room in a state of awe and admiration for the work of this lady and her “accomplices”. Take-home messages included how far we, as humans, have strayed so far away from nature and how animals and birds can help to restore our balance with what nature and this earth have to offer and how a child with “no voice” for several years began to speak when offered the input of one of Dr Stead-Dexter’s “accomplices”. And also, by the way, we learned of the ability of kestrels to see ultra-violet light helping them detect urine trails and the route taken by their prey with predictable outcome. *Mike W*



U3A Online Learning Events

Several members have recommended u3a Online Learning Events. They're free via Zoom and cover a wide range of subjects.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events#Events>

Tiverton u3a 35th Birthday

This year marks the 35th anniversary of the founding of Tiverton u3a. To mark the occasion, the committee are organising a number of events.

Firstly, we are having a **35th birthday buffet lunch** after our June monthly meeting. Full details are in your invitation, which you will soon receive by email. .£15 per head for a buffet to include desserts and coffee/tea You can pay at our April or May meetings. Please ask me if you would like more information.

SAVE THE DATE 26th JUNE 2025. - *Wendy Bond*

Later in the year, there will be an evening sail onboard the **TIVERTONIAN, the horse drawn barge on the Grand Western Canal.**

The date: Saturday, 2nd August 2025

The place: The Wharf, Canal Hill, EX16 4HX
Arrival time at Wharf: 18.15
Embarkation: 18.30
Departure: 19.00
Duration: 2.5 hours
Cost: £35.50 pp to include fish and chip supper

Please let me know, BEFORE Thursday, 8th May 2025, if you would like to come on this event. Numbers are limited. It will be on first come first served basis.

PLEASE ONLY REPLY TO THE EMAIL ADDRESS BELOW.

Angie Cheshire

tivertonu3asocialmed@gmail.com

Also, as part of our 35th Birthday Celebrations, we are suggesting that at our Meeting at Moorhayes on Thursday 24th April, you are welcome to: **BRING A FRIEND** to enjoy what Tiverton u3a has to offer.

Lastly, we would like to identify the **longest serving member** (or members) of the organisation. If you are a long-standing member, or know of someone who is, please let me know. - *Mike Warren*



Browns Bay, New Zealand

Angela Woodhead returned to New Zealand earlier this year to visit family members who have settled there. Having made the journey many times over the years, she typically includes a stopover in Hong Kong to break up the long trip.

During her three-week stay, Angela really enjoyed the time spent with her grandchildren, whilst also fitting in a few social activities. A highlight of her visit was attending a splendid open-air concert at the Auckland Botanic Gardens.

She and her family also enjoyed a beach picnic at Browns Bay, where the others swam in the warm sea—though Angela opted to stay onshore. As many of our members know, **Browns Bay u3a** is twinned with **Tiverton u3a**, and Angela had hoped to attend their monthly meeting. Unfortunately, she missed it by just one day and had to settle for a friendly phone call instead!

All in all, it was a wonderful trip and a rare but much-appreciated opportunity to spend quality time with her family. If you'd like to know more about Browns Bay u3a, please click here <https://www.u3abb.nz/>



Travel to and from General Meetings

At the recent AGM, a question was raised by a member about problems in travel arrangements to and from our monthly meeting for those not enjoying independent means of travel. Your committee is endeavouring to discover how many members find this an issue. Could anyone experiencing such problems please reply, in confidence, to Mike Warren, tivertonu3achair@gmail.com.? Please specify your location and any special circumstances and what options the Committee could consider.

- *Mike Warren*



The universe is 13.7 million years old - and we're fortunate enough to be alive at the same time as Chocolate Hobnobs

GROUP REPORTS

Unless they have specifically requested otherwise, group coordinators contact details have been omitted on the newsletter page of the website, as this is a public document. However, they can be found in the "members only" section of the website, which needs a password, already provided to members. - *Nigel*



Always Write
Coordinator:
Heather Bingham

The group meets for 2 hours from 10 am on the 4th Wednesday of the month, in the Lighthouse café in Bampton Street. Next meeting: 28th May 2025

At April's meeting we shared our writing 'homework' on: The note that fell out of the library book; turning an inanimate object into a character or exploring a new

character in 200 words. Again, some very clever creations from a teddy-hugging reporter (thanks Annie!) to a lost button which found its way home (thanks Sally!).

At the Open Mic Night at The Bookery in Crediton (organised by Crediton's U3A Creative Writing Group) Nickie read her vividly descriptive story; The Island; and mine was a reworked fairy tale based on Goldilocks (but with a twist, of course!). Another such evening is planned for the Autumn.

Equally, the Creative Writing Workshop held in Tiverton Museum also inspired us to think about the past and have resulted in some very interesting stories based on family members from the past and the long-enduring superstition of hiding an old shoe in the wall of a property to ward off evil spirits! And just in case you ever find one ... oh yes, I'd recommend you put it back! Until next time – keep writing

- Heather.

THE DAY THE RAPTORS CAME ... (TO OUR AGM!)

Dr K spoke to us of nature and senses
How breathing in forest air boosts our defences,
We should listen to animals, open our minds,
This was real U3A learning and we treasure such finds!

Three wooden crates had caught our attention,
Then George took the stage with no apprehension.
His beautiful face and soft, fluffy feathers
Captured our hearts but aren't good in wet weather!

He hunts when it's dimpsy (that's twilight and dawn)
Silently flying like a ghost's breath indrawn.
He'll capture his prey and swallow it whole
Most likely a mouse, but often a vole.

Next we met Rosie, a large eagle owl
her amber eyes watched us – no, not a scowl!
She might catch a fox, take it high up a tree,
Her ear tufts stood up, she was happy, you see!

Inca, a kestrel, was last to be seen,
A hunter who hovers, by victim, unseen.
With excellent eyesight, including UV,
You feel for those voles, tracked by their w**!

So three birds of prey, shared their day with us,
A hiss, some wing flappings, otherwise, no fuss.
Big "Thank You's" to George, Rosie, Inca and Dr K
for your patient, informative, truly wondrous display!

- Heather



Cryptic Crosswords
Coordinator:
Graeme Cozens

Margaret Farrar, a legendary crossword editor, once said:
"It is hardly possible to overestimate the value of the crossword puzzle as a means of training the mind to think."
This highlights the cognitive benefits of solving puzzles.

But please attempt and enjoy this month's cryptic crossword for more great clues. It contains an abundance of anagrams, a wealth of wordplay and is, frankly, **FUN!**

Graeme. COZENSG@YAHOO.CO.UK



Croquet
Coordinator:
Wendy Bond

Summer is fast approaching and the Croquet Group will commence playing on Tuesday 6th May - and we usually play until the end of September.

We play on 3 lawns on the outfield of Heathcoat Cricket Club which is located at Knightshayes Court in Tiverton EX16 7RQ.

Usually we meet every Tuesday from 2pm until 4.30pm but occasionally the day and time may vary to accommodate cricket fixtures. We will let you know when this occurs. Rain does sometimes prevent play.

Equipment is available and tuition can be arranged for anyone new to the game. At the moment we are still “roughing” it as the clubhouse has yet to be replaced. There are toilet facilities available but please bring your own refreshments. There is a fee of £5 per session.

We are not unduly competitive We play for FUN! - Wendy



Economics

Coordinator:
Mike Barlow

We started our meeting with a review of the **Economic Indicators** and noted that a number were in good shape. The expectation is that due to changes in April eg increases in **NICs** and **Minimum Wages** together with higher levels of **Stamp Duty** that there will be some deterioration in growth and employment rates.

The main topic for this session was however **Commodity Pricing** which Tony J had researched for us. He started with **Gold prices** which have grown dramatically in the last 20 years primarily due to China's purchases. Even since our meeting there have been further rises as investors seek a safe haven against the daily fiasco of President Trump's tariffs. China is the dominant player in many of the **other Metal markets**. There is a fast increase in demand for use in Electric Vehicles, Computer discs etc and since these metals are generally hard to extract, prices are expected to increase.

Based on how quickly policies are changing we're sure to have plenty to talk about at our next meeting on Wed 7th May at 10am in Halberton Village Hall.

Contact mikeandsue.barlow@gmail.com if you'd like to join us. ~ Mike Barlow



Board Games

Coordinator:
Dawn Ferguson

I am offering some taster sessions to see if we have enough interest to run an evening board game group. The next 2 taster sessions are Friday 9th May and Saturday 7th June.

Numbers will be limited to 6 for these first evenings but depending on numbers and

interest this has the potential to be a much bigger group.

The proposal is to get together monthly on a Friday or a Saturday evening, (or possibly a Thursday) arriving from 7pm for a “kick off” with the dice at 7.30pm for a couple of hours. A selection of different board games to be played over time, but focused on one game for the evening, with a run through and then a game. No previous experience necessary just a willingness to join in and have a go. Some games will be played as an individual whilst others would be in a team. (No Monopoly or Risk as we only have a couple of hours and want to leave as friends). I propose we take turns to host the evening, or hire somewhere small if necessary or preferred. First few sessions in Tiverton. Bring your slippers or style it in socks. Tea and coffee provided. If this sounds like something you would enjoy, please get in touch.

Please register your interest with Dawn and your evening availability/preference.

Email Ferguson.dawn67@gmail.com



Gardens
Coordinator:
Margaret Chumbley

With a visit to Castle Hill Filleigh at the end of March and two very different speakers Becky Searle and Caradoc Doy in April members of the Gardens Group have been kept busy recently.

Jill writes " Nineteen members visited the 50 acre woodland gardens at Castle Hill North Devon in March sunshine to walk along terraced hillside paths, with a pretty stream, surrounded by daffodils, primroses, camellias, magnolias and other spring flowers. The Palladian house provided an attractive backdrop in a lovely undulating setting with far reaching views higher up, attractive follies and a tea room at the entrance. Afterwards we had a very enjoyable lunch at Quince Honey Farm"



- Margaret



German Conversation
Coordinator:
John Smith.

Due to a significant number of absences in the lead-up to and over the Easter period, our first monthly meeting was cancelled and we now look forward to our second monthly meeting which will take place on April 28 when we can reminisce about our adventures since we last met (auf Deutsch natürlich).

- John



Going Places
Coordinators:
John O'Connor
Tony Lowe, Chris Steele

Exeter Energy Recovery Facility

tonne of waste a year and much of this is now handled by the Centre. Using a furnace running at above 850°C they convert our black bin waste into 24,000 Mwh of electricity a year (enough to power about 8000 houses). The things that aren't burnt are mostly used to create other materials or products.

The second group of 12 members had an excellent visit thanks to the knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff at the Exeter Energy Recovery Centre. Households in Devon produce about 1



Despite having the 2nd best record for recycling in the country, 28% of Devon's Black Bin waste could have been recycled. They challenged us to reduce our consumption of new goods and think about all the things we can do before the last step of needing to put it in the Black Bin. Some of these are shown in the graphic - *Mike Barlow*

Visit to the RNLI Training College

The trip to the RNLI Training College on Tuesday 10 th June is now fully booked. However, if you haven't already put your name on the waiting list and would like to go, please get in touch. Providing there is sufficient interest I may organise a second visit later in the year - *Tony*
lowe.tony@yahoo.co.uk

Coombe Martin Silver Mine

We are planning a visit to the Coombe Martin Silver mine on August 7th The website for the Silver Mine is www.combemartinmines.co.uk/ Due to health and safety issues, the mine tour will be above ground only. There will be a talk about Silver mining in North Devon. This event is free, but a donation to the mine society is encouraged. This trip will be a car share event.

Heritage Days

Additionally, to coincide with the Heritage Days festival we are planning a visit to Arlington Court. This event takes place in September, and will be free. The actual date for this will be announced in June. Arlington court is home to the National carriage collection and is well worth visiting. This trip will be a car share event. Details of dates and times will follow, once the Heritage Days festival programme, has been published - *John*

SS Great Britain and Bristol Harbourside

A visit is planned for later in the year.



Trad Jazz
Coordinator:
Mike Barlow

One of the highlights of the April sessions was Spats Langham's Hot Fingers at Magelake Pavilion in Uffculme. It was thrilling to see this group of super talented musicians who share a

passion for jazz music. The band has performed for 21 years. They love to entertain and we did have the best of nights with Hot Fingers. ~ *Angie*

The selection for May is as follows:

Wed 14th May Mississippi Dreamboat at the Jubilee Hall in Langford Budville

Wed 21st May Gordon's Algiers Strutters at the Magelake Hall in Uffculme

Check the Trad Jazz page on the website for more information



Hope you enjoy the sessions. If you need more information contact mikeandsue.barlow@gmail.com or search for **Trad Jazz** on our website.

~ Mike Barlow



Line Dancing

Coordinator:
Mich Bowers

Well, we are still dancing, despite changes in dates. .And yet ANOTHER coming up. April 28th AS NORMAL. But a change for May- just one session on 19h. - *Mich*



Local Theatre

Coordinator:
Betty Thrall

The Tiverton Dramatic Society's next play is "CASH ON DELIVERY ", a farce by Michael Clooney. Our block booking is May 15th 7-30 pm in The New Hall. PLEASE PAY for your tickets £10 each by April 24th monthly meeting.

This riotous farce has all the ingredients for a rib-tickling hilarity. Eric Swan (aided by his Uncle George & unbeknown to his wife Linda) has pocketed thousands of pounds through fraudulent claims. When Norman (the Lodger) opens the door to Mr Jenkins ,the DSS inspector mayhem follows !!

So do join us to support this very talented group and be well entertained.

If you have paid for tickets for Rose & Friends Variety Concert, proceeds to Devon Air Ambulance Saturday May 3rd, please collect them at the April 24th monthly meeting or on the night from me in the bar area of the New Hall.

A date for your diaries Thursday September 11th when Tiverton Operatic Society will perform the Musical, THE WEDDING SINGER Look Out for more details in the coming months.

- *Betty* 01884 242998



Mahjongg

Coprdinator:
Celia Hicks

Mahjong is a tile based game which originated in China. The tiles are based on Chines characters and symbols, Bamboos, Circles, Characters, Winds and Dragons. Preferably in a group of four, you aim to make a pattern of tiles by simple exchange. It is not difficult but like all games there are nuances which are taken on

board slowly.....and, I insist, for fun. My groups follow the British Mahjong Association Rules but I advise no-one to read them (or any others) until they have sat down and been instructed on how to play. Then all becomes clear! Repetitive DOING becomes learning!

There are no fees as we meet in peoples' homes. I provide the Mahjong set and racks. I am willing to come from Bampton to any region close to Tiverton so do get in touch if you feel you'd like to know more. Alternatively, I am willing to host at home. 01398 332101 (with answerphone) and celiahicks13@gmail.com - *Celia*



Photography

Coordinator:
Roger Gunn

Seven members of the group shared their **Spring photos** at Roger's place and with Spring in the air I was reminded of this little ditty –

Spring is sprung, The grass is riz, I wonders where the birdies is? (looking skyward)

Flying high, in the sky SPLAT!, (wiping deposit from eye) Darn good thing cows can't fly!

Sue shared a lovely video of busy bees buzzing around pulmonaria (lung wort) and altogether many beautiful photos of shrubs, flowers and animals representing images of Spring. We saw amongst others, fritillaria, daffs, narcissi, aubretia, camelia, magnolia, celandine and primroses. There was a pregnant pony eating gorse on Exmoor, cow with calf and an expectant sheep. The pink sunset over Bampton was spectacular. A great display!

Mike found some interesting images at East Worlington church and the burnt moor at West Anstey with flowering gorse that had managed to survive the inferno. He discovered a couple of ostriches lurking near Brent Knoll, the house and gardens at Haddon Grange, distinctive cherry tree bark and attractive floral scenes around Knightshayes. Another fine display.

Tim's selection of images started with his trip to Battersea Power Station where he was 'making the most' (last month's focus) of a trip to London. He didn't have much luck with the weather, unfortunately. A visit to Westonbirt Arboretum produced a variety of images of animal sculptures, rhododendron, primroses and primula and lines of lime trees.

Mr and Mrs Gunn did a whistlestop tour one day which took in Dunster, Watchet and Knightshayes. The Spring presentation was a very professional video, complete with suitable music, filmed and edited by Roger, featuring (a very patient) Mrs Gunn. All three venues didn't disappoint with their displays of Spring which included hundreds of tadpoles in a pond.

Nigel sprung into action with a 'spring is just around the corner' picture. Literally that, a spring (the metal type) visible behind the corner of a wall. Tivvy beach featured, as did a selection of colourful plants and flowers at Knightshayes. Did he go to South Africa for the photo of the colourful flowering Clivia? No, fortunately, it thrives inside his house.



John focussed on blue tits nesting. Last year, as his nestcam testified, they were happily installed in the nesting box. This year, however, obviously concerned by the invasion of their privacy, they have made home in a (more private) vent! There was a great video clip of their comings and goings. A fascinating Winter project John started, researching the history of Halberton Village Hall is continuing into Spring. We were treated to a photo of the oldest document found, a lease, dated October 1734. Photography and history combined.

Phil showed a selection of images representing Spring which included 2 springs, flowers and plants but did NOT include buzzing bees, Mrs Gunn, tadpoles or anything in a nest!

The next meeting, Thursday May 8th, is scheduled to be a trip to Exeter. It may be weather dependant so further detail will be sent by Roger nearer the time. - Phil



Railway Group

Coordinator:
Jose Kimber

Our April meeting as usual takes place the day after the main meeting, on **Friday 25 May, 10.30am at my house**. We will be watching another of the Railways at War series. If you would like to attend and are not on my list of group members, please contact me for the details.

On **Friday 16 May**, we are planning to visit the South Devon Railway. We will be travelling by train from Tiverton Parkway to Totnes, and then travelling on the South Devon Railway from Totnes Riverside. This will take the place of our usual May meeting as that is close to the Spring Bank Holiday.

We are also looking ahead to the June meeting when we are planning another visit, possibly to the East Devon Railway, which would also include a visit to Shillingstone station, which has a short running line, a museum and various other items of interest. Details are yet to be finalised. This visit is also open to any U3A members.

If anyone is interested in either of these visits, you will be welcome to join us, please contact me for details. - Jose



Ramblers

Coordinator:
Jenny Bedford

It was a fine morning for the **April Ramble**. A robust group of 17 walkers gathered at Uplowman Village Hall ready to be led along a familiar route (to some) around open countryside to the west of Uplowman.

We were promised good views, and we weren't disappointed. It was clear and bright so the views from the tops were panoramic. The overall distance was perhaps slightly shorter than advertised because we preferred not to wade through slimy, fetid mud blocking a gateway and instead found an alternative route. This meant that the opportunity to fill our boots with water was missed as we also avoided the river crossing.

How many stiles were there? Certainly, more than the 3 advertised, but who was counting? Nobody really. The few cows we saw showed only marginal interest in us but the 4 horses became lifelong friends to a few in the group.

Keen to support the local economy, but not willing to spend TOO much, a few thirsty types sat out at The White Ball Inn.

Thank you, Roger, for an enjoyable ramble. - Phil

The next Ramble will be led by Jan Proud from Clatworthy Reservoir car park starting at 10am. GR: ST 039 330; OS Explorer OL9. Postcode TA4 2EJ. Nearest What Three Words: rankings, gateway, eyeliner.

It is a tranquil 5 mile walk on good undulating paths that take us around the perimeter of the reservoir with views of the surrounding west Somerset hills. Plenty of parking with toilet facilities and benches en route for banana breaks.

Directions: From Bampton, take the B3190 north, past Haddon Hill and Upton. Take RH turn to Huish Champflower. **IMPORTANT** keep on the road towards the hamlet of Clatworthy rather than branching left as it is usually flooded. At the T junction, where Clatworthy village is signposted to the right, turn left and the entrance to the car park is on the right. - Jenny



Skittles

Coordinators:
John Carr
Janet Loader

The winter Monday evening Skittles sessions finished on the 14th April with some skittling and a 'Bring and Share' buffet and chat. Thanks to everyone who contributed. Janet announced that the evenings are booked to re-start on Monday 6th October but that she would like another joint co-ordinator, John and Andrea are moving away from the area. Look out for future Newsletters.

Joint Co-ordinators: John Carr (01404 841367) and Janet Loader (01884 252116)



Snooker

Coordinator:
John Anderson

A small, social group catering for all levels of Snooker ability (up to "average"!).

Our normal meeting dates at Halberton Village Hall are the 1st and 3rd Friday each month. Our start time is 3.30pm.

Conveniently, buses from Tiverton stop at

the door, so you can use your bus-pass to get there. I am a keyholder for opening up, so give me a ring beforehand if you would like to join in and have a game or two. -

John. Tel: 07947 000757



**WALK and
TALK**

Strollers and Twalkers

Coordinator:
Chris Mumford

TWALKERS - These walks are out in the countryside, generally within 10 miles of Tiverton. The maximum distance is no more than 3.6 miles and take no more than 90 minutes. The venue changes weekly.

STROLLERS - Venue changes monthly for a gentle walk lasting no more than 60 minutes

around the streets of Tiverton.

For more details and a programme, please contact Chris Mumford:
chris.mumford21@gmail.com



Short Tennis

Coordinator
Diane Lewis

The new Short Tennis Group has been active for several weeks now, following on from two taster sessions to assess viability and interest. A small, enthusiastic group of players - some with tennis experience and some without - meet on Fridays from 10 - 11.30 am at Uplowman Hall and we

charge £2.50 to cover Hall hire and refreshments. If more players would like to join us regularly, we have the option to extend sessions to two hours, so if anyone else is interested in joining us or learning more, please contact Di Lewis on 01884 821329 or 07713 311616.



Short Trek

Coordinator:
Phil Akers

The March Short Trek.

We had a great walk on Dartmoor on a cold but sunny day. The leader promised 1300 feet of ascent, but it felt as if we did that 2 or 3 times! The elite group of 7 of us went over Hound Tor and down to the Becka Brook with its mossy banks and Clapper Bridge. Picnic lunch was on the church

green in Manaton before going over Bowerman's Nose (note the Ordnance Survey still uses apostrophes correctly!) and back to the cars. At the debrief in the quaint Rock Inn in Haytor Vale we were entertained, amongst other things, by Jan's tales of graffiti in Tiverton. Thanks, Roger, for an excellent day on the moors.. ~ *Mike B*

The April Short Trek on Friday 25th April will be led by Peter Hall and will start just south of Dry Bridge on Brendon Common GRSS759453.

To reach the start point take the link road towards South Molton, turning right on the A399, following signs to Simonsbath. Then drive north on the B3223. The car park is the second blue P sign on the right, as shown on the O S map, about 2 miles after crossing the cattle grid at Brendon Two Gates. It has a footpath sign to Malmsmead. Starting on the path to Malmsmead we then turn right towards Doone Country. We then turn north following Badgworthy Water towards Malmsmead. Taking a left along Post Lane, we take a footpath at Lower Ball Gate, back towards Brendon Common.

Good moorland views if weather is kind. Walk is 7.5 miles, 10 am start with picnic lunch.



Table Tennis

Coordinators:
Katherine Green
Lorne Loxterkamp

The group meets every Monday, except Bank Holidays, from 10am to 12 noon at Sunningmead Community Centre. We have four tables and generally play doubles to ensure that everyone gets as many games as possible. Currently new members are welcome, but spaces are limited. We endeavour to help those with less experience of

the game, but unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate complete beginners.

Anyone interested in joining the group should contact Katherine and Lorne.



Thinking Allowed

Coordinator:
Eunice Hinds

We had our Group Meeting on 17th April 2025. This was the second meeting of the "Thinking Allowed" group and our chosen subject was "Populism", a word of convenience used in a variety of contexts, some favourable and some not so. The simple definition of "a political programme or movement that champions, or claims to champion, the common person, usually by contrast with the perceived or real elite" was considered

open to all kinds of interpretation by our group.

Some examples of Populist movements in the past resonate as being positive e.g. the Chartist movement in the 19th Century but recent examples, the fascist movement in Europe, offer an awful warning. Much of our discussion centred on why populist movements appear to be currently gaining traction – uncertainty, lack of involvement, loss of agency, decline in faith movements, extraordinary disparity in wealth and the dreaded social media?

Roger Stickland, once again, facilitated our tour through this ongoing fascinating phenomenon.

For details of future meetings please contact EuniceHinds@gmail.com. -- Eunice



Thursday Lunch

Coordinator:
Angie Cheshire

Lunch at the Mitre, Witheridge, on Thursday, 10th April, was an intimate affair. Everybody agreed the food was excellent and as we were a smaller gathering, we could have lively discussions with the whole table. A very enjoyable outing. ~ Liz and Colin

Our May outing on 8th, will be at The Merry Harriers, Westcott, Cullompton, EX15 1SA, organised by Joy and Ken. Email me if you have not already signed up.

- Angie. angelacheshire@hotmail.com



Trekking

Coordinator:
Gordon Cleaver

The April Trek

A merry group of fourteen enjoyed a lovely trek in the early April sunshine. Led by Tony Kidd we were joined by another two new members who entered into the spirit of the group straight away as we were treated to an undulating 10 mile circular route starting and finishing at Dunkeswell Airfield.

From the airfield we walked to Bowerhayes Farm and onto Higher Mackham. Continuing on to Gorwell Farm we had fantastic views of the Blackdown Hills and even Wellington Monument in the distance. A short break at Madford watching the geese on the lake and the piglets in their pen revived all to proceed further. We continued on through more glorious Devon countryside until we got to Dunkeswell Abbey where we spent a while exploring the ruins of this once expansive site. The delightful little Church of the Holy Trinity still exists surrounded by immaculate grounds with masses of daffodils and primroses.

We proceeded up through Trickeys Farm where we stopped for our lunch high on a field with gorgeous far-reaching views in the hot spring sunshine. Passing through Haynes Farm we continued to Bodmiscombe. Onwards then to Sheldon with time to explore the gorgeous little church of St. James the Greater. The last of four hills then took us back to our starting point for a much-needed drink and debrief at the Aviator Bar. Lots of aeronautical activities are advertised here including parachuting, helicopter rides and wing walking. It was muted that there may be an opportunity for a U3a group to partake in an event or two..... or was that just the cider talking?

Kelvin

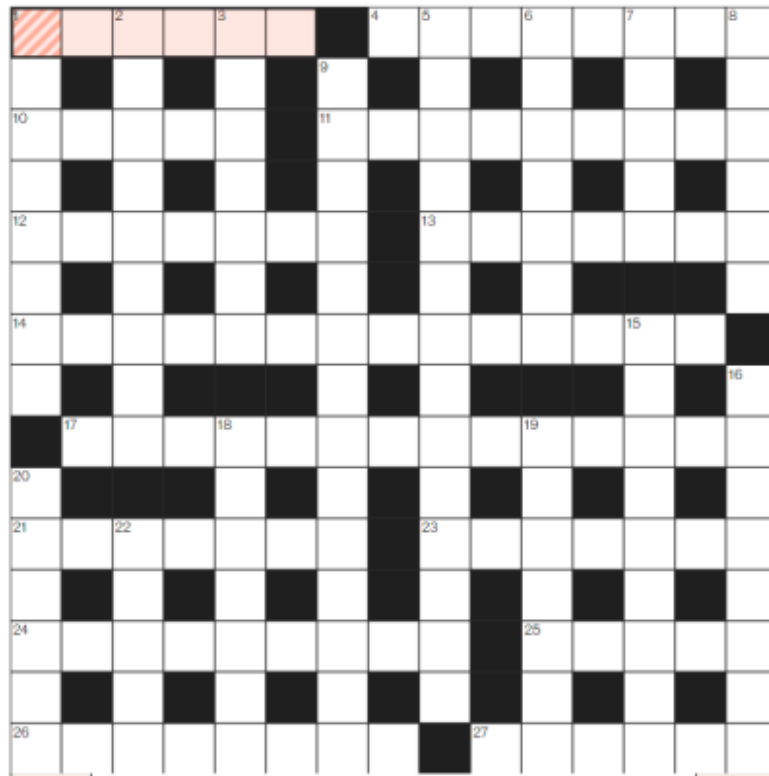


May Long Trek – Thursday 1 st May 2025 – 10.00 AM Lee Bay Village Car Park

The May Trek will be led by Tony L. Our trek will begin at Lee Bay, just a few miles from Ilfracombe. We'll park in the village car park next to the Memorial Hall (SS 485463 – £5 per day, cash only) before heading uphill through Borough Wood. From there, we follow the old Ilfracombe to Barnstaple railway line, eventually reaching Turnpike Cross. The route then levels out for a pleasant cross-country walk before descending to Combesgate, on the edge of Woolacombe village. From here, we'll join the South West Coast Path, taking in dramatic views of Morte Point, Rockham Bay, and Bull Point Lighthouse before looping back to Lee Bay. Expect a scenic and varied 10-mile route with some interesting undulations. Bring a packed lunch – we start at 10 AM!

Please let me know if you are planning to come on this Trek or you are interested in joining the Trekking Group, please contact Gordon. - 01884 242563 grcleaver54@gmail.com

Cryptic Crossword #45: May 2025 (Solution at the end of this newsletter)



Across

- 1 Footballer putting on a show in the middle of FA cadet training (6)
- 4 Christian arrow-maker? (8)
- 10 Firstly, at the top in case, for storage space (5)
- 11 It was deceitful of French, hard nun (9)
- 12 Electronic tangle can be freed up, then it becomes graceful (7)
- 13 Done in cartoon while working (7)
- 14 Coherence or react in the middle of the centre, & initially not clear, epitath (14)
- 17 Daisy, or girl with another name with shiner (5-4,5)
- 21 Push Lib to disseminate information (7)
- 23 Chopper speeds into French summer (7)
- 24 Former M.P. and lady suggest an incongruous projection(5,4)
- 25 The London Arena and I create a pungent gas! (5)
- 26 Look out for the guard! (8)
- 27 Regularly spire is easy to confess to (6)

Down

- 1 Fire the sergeant for Spanish dancing! (8)
- 2 This cartel had met together in a holy place (9)
- 3 Announce Ant and Dec, Laredo included (7)
- 5 The female with the fan (4,10)
- 6 The remit, confused but not hard, is for one who builds mounds (7)
- 7 Spread out earth to find the courage to carry on (5)
- 8 Crasser and a bit dammed to steer things into safer areas (6)
- 9 Numerous possibilities to solve this clue! (8,6)
- 15 Loser's ace dish (9)
- 16 Curiosity cranks up the cash! (8)
- 18 Me, me in the football chorus for an Italian area (7)
- 19 Sounds like an American loser. Help! (7)
- 20 Someone deposits eggs in his pawn shop (6)
- 22 For a start you are not allowed to beg in there in any way (5)

