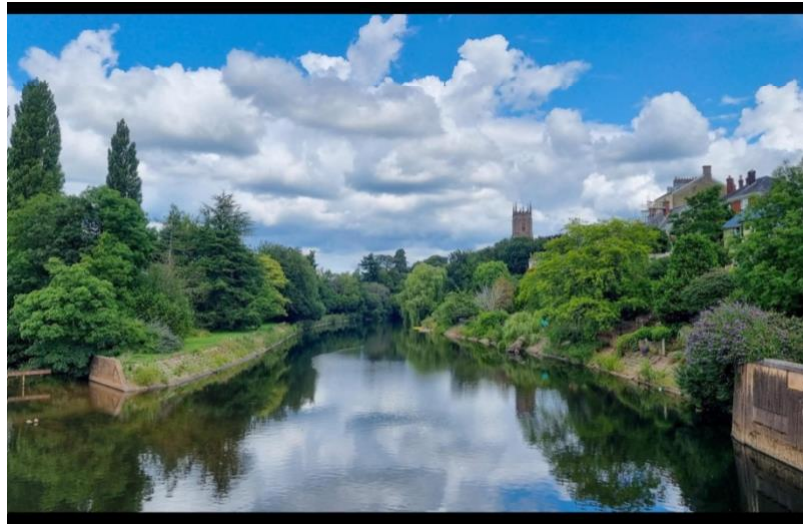


Tiverton u3a Newsletter

learn, laugh, live

Volume 11 Issue 3

March /
April
2026



GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 26th March
10:00 for 10:30am

Our AGM

Please come and support your Tiverton U3A

This will be followed by our very own

Fergus McGilp

on **“POTS ‘n PANS - do you stick with the old pots or try something new?”**

Fergus spent 45 years working in the Broadcast/Media Industries and is here today to update us on the changes made by BT (Openreach) to move us all on to a fibre-based network

Tea coffee and biscuits as usual

Moorhayes Community Centre Lea Road Tiverton EX16 6SU

And for our next meeting on Thursday 23rd April

Peter Bangs will be giving us a talk on the local charity CHAT
(March and April speakers are a change from our publicised speakers)

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Facebook <https://facebook.com/tivertonu3a>
Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/tivertonu3>

Tiverton u3a welcomes four new members this month

- **Mike Gleeson**
- **Jill Gowing**
- **Paula Moore**
- **Beverley Boundy**

FROM THE COMMITTEE

February General Meeting

Just once in a while, you do appreciate when you are in the company of someone who is quite extraordinary and a true leader in their field; that was the impression and experience of attending and participating in this presentation. Paul Davies, ex-strategic voice of the Meteorological Office, now engaged with worldwide organisations, such as the World Bank and Singapore Airlines, and professor at Newcastle University, presented an authoritative description of the history of weather forecasting through to current concerns about climate change.

Throughout the history of weather forecasting he felt it instructive to appreciate that “disasters provide impetus for change” from the days of Robert Fitzroy in the mid-19th Century, in protecting life at sea, through to James Stagg’s advice in delaying the date of the D-Day landings from the 5th to 6th of June 1944, because of a change in the weather, thus identifying a crucial opportunity for success. The warming of the oceans was vividly demonstrated over a relatively short period of time and the resulting impact on sea life and weather patterns was much in evidence. The outcomes are increasing frequency of hurricanes and other extreme weather events and the resulting devastation being intensified as they approach land.

The science of weather in constructing forecasts is one aspect only, since the relationship with behavioural and social science also feeds into the mix. An ability to construct a forecast which requires action depends not just on the “science” or the “facts” but the way it is presented, the frequency of the message and the timing in relation to the expected event. Too much warning and relaxation is the result, urgency often gets the best results. “Accuracy in warning does not always equal accuracy in actions.”

Noting the increase in extreme weather events raised questions with the audience about the future of the planet and the likelihood of survival in certain locations. Prof Davies, demonstrating his optimistic credentials, referred back to the “disasters provide impetus for change” principle in believing that humans will react positively at some point to counter or avoid the “ultimate disaster.” An inspirational presentation appreciated by all. I believe we all feel safer knowing that such expertise exists and is heard and used at the highest levels.

Mike Warren

Annual General Meeting

Please note that the March General Meeting will be preceded by our **AGM**. This will include the Chairman’s report, the Treasurer’s report and appointment of Committee Members. Please make an effort to attend, as we need a quorum of members to pass any resolutions. - *Mike Warren*

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>

Please find below the link to the new edition of u3a Matters Magazine.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/u3a-matters>

This is shortened version of the hard copy magazine

Third Age Trust u3a and Me survey

The Trust has asked Council Representatives to send this out to all u3as in our regions. We would like to invite your members to take part in a national u3a survey that explores what u3a means to them and how being part of u3a has impacted their lives.

This survey is open to all members so please take a moment to fill it out yourselves as well. It is a great opportunity for members to share their experiences and support their u3a to thrive into the future. The feedback will be used to grow membership, demonstrate the impact of u3a and raise our profile. Please share the survey with your members and encourage as many people as possible to take part: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/u3a-me>

To thank members for their time, they will be entered in a John Lewis £100 prize draw. The survey closes on the 31st March.

Thank you for your support.
Marian Luck



Imagine the trouble she has trying to introduce herself in France



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:
Nickie Haynes

The group was re-invigorated by Heather, who has had to take a bit of a back seat for now. We carry on, grateful for some of her new ideas, and at our first meetings, established how our creative outlets could be met.

In February we focused on a Ten-Minute writing - a great discipline, and it's amazing just how creative you can be when you just have to put something on paper! From a prompt of a picture of a tree in blossom we generated both poetry and prose, The next meeting has a choice of two topics: Spring or The Distant Horizon. With a new member (Welcome Meri) and possibly another we go from strength to strength. We write for enjoyment, not for criticism, and when we meet to exchange our writings and chat, it's a very companionable morning (last Wednesday of the month).

If anyone thinks they have the urge to write - it doesn't have to be Booker Prize perfect! - an enjoyment for words (both serious or whimsical) is all it takes. Contact Nickie Haynes if you would like to explore your own creative writing a little bit more. *Nickie*



Croquet

Coordinator:
Jean Brown

It's time to think about taking out your croquet mallet and giving it a polish in preparation for May time when hopefully everything will be ready to start the croquet season at Heathcoat Cricket Club, Knightshayes. Watch this space over the coming months for future information.
Jean Brown



Cryptic Crosswords

Coordinator:
Graeme Cozens

I'd love to hear from you if you have a go at the monthly crossword - whether you like it, how you get on with it Do drop me an email.

Here's your next opportunity: the cryptic crossword and the solution are included in the newsletter as usual. Hope you have fun cracking those clues. *Graeme.*
(cozensg@yahoo.co.uk)



Economics

Coordinator:
Mike Barlow

Due to other commitments we had a smaller group than usual but still a lot of interesting discussions. These mainly centred on John's review of the Economic indicators. We noted, not for the first time, that Productivity increases are the magic way to improve the UK economy. Whilst there are improvements in the service

sectors there are decreases in Manufacturing which result in an overall flat situation for some time. We also had another attempt to demystify the numbers involved with NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training) with some conclusions broadly in line with the latest radio pronouncements.

We will meet at Jane's on Wed 1st April but don't anticipate a great deal to joke about! Let me know if you'd like to join us. ~ Mike Barlow

Contact mikeandsue.barlow@gmail.com ~ Mike B



Folk Dancing

Coordinators:
John & Hazel Ridd

We dance jigs, reels and a waltz, in different formations, and different eras from 17th century to more modern dances. All dances are explained, and the movements are taught, and the fun is fitting the moves to the music.

We always welcome new members, so if you fancy coming along and joining in we will be delighted to see you, (you don't need to bring a partner) -- John



Gardens
Coordinator:
Margaret Chumbley

Following the excellent talk by Professor Davies at the February Moorhayes meeting with particular

reference to weather prediction and climate change, I thought the following quote quite apt.

"The idea we can expect dependable weather patterns has become wobbly at best; we need to adapt and stagger bulb and seed sowing just in case. We need to use common sense and stay flexible about choosing what to do when. Nature is all about balance, and no where is it more obvious than in our gardens"

Sixteen members enjoyed brunch at The Lost Kitchen before attending our first garden visit of 2026 - to Knightshayes. The garden, as always, with its tapestry of spring flowers did not disappoint and was radiant in the beautiful bright sunshine. *Margaret*



Group brunch at the Lost Kitchen



Spring flowers at Knightshayes



**German
Conversation
Coordinator:
John Smith.**

We have met on two occasions this month. We have revisited our attempt to outdo Lee Mack and David Mitchell with our German version of “Would I lie to you?” I still cannot believe that I managed to convince two members that I once sang in Westminster Abbey! They have clearly not heard my attempts at singing. I did not believe one member’s boast (?) that he once drank a pint of beer pulled by Barbara Windsor

(not in the Queen Vic). He did!

One of our members continues to pursue his aim of visiting every Country in the World (currently in Greenland). He has “done” every Country in Europe. He missed our first meeting as he was in Munich. He provides regular reports on his adventures. *- John*

|



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

Roadford Reservoir

We enjoyed a fascinating visit to Roadford Reservoir earlier this month. The main purpose of our trip was to see how the reservoir operates by going inside the dam and climbing the

overflow tower. This impressive structure stands prominently in the middle of the lake and can only be reached through a long access tunnel. Thanks to a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide from South West Water, we were able to do exactly that.

After entering the 'dry side' of the dam through some formidable 'blast-proof' doors, we followed a long but surprisingly airy tunnel leading to the base of the overflow tower. By this stage we were several hundred yards from the shore and around 130 feet below water level, so it was



an energetic climb to reach the viewing platform at the top. The effort was well rewarded. From the top we enjoyed excellent views across the reservoir, as well as the impressive sight of the bellmouth spillway in full flow, quite a mind-boggling experience. This spillway carries excess water from the reservoir to generators in the pump house, producing enough electricity to power around 500 homes.

This was a really interesting visit and provided a valuable insight into how one of the South West's major reservoirs is managed – *Tony*

SS Great Britain and Bristol Harbourside

We are planning to visit Brunel's SS Great Britain in Bristol docks on Wednesday 15th April. The cost per person which will include transport (coach or minibus depending on numbers), entrance fee and a guided tour is expected to be in the region of £40. If you are interested, please contact - *Chris* (chris.steele.home@btinternet.com)

Burnham-on-Sea Hovercraft Rescue Service

We're also planning to visit the BARB Search and Rescue Centre on Friday 8th May. BARB Search & Rescue was founded in 1992 and is based on the seafront at Burnham-on-Sea. It is an independent charity run by a dedicated team of local volunteers and operates two rescue hovercraft as well as two inshore rescue boats. The team is on-call 24/7 and has saved hundreds of lives over the years, responding to a wide range of emergencies.

This is a great opportunity to take a close look at the hovercraft and other equipment the team use. There is no charge for the visit but as a charity, donations are very welcome and can be made on the day.

Please note – this is a car-share event, so you will need to make your own travel arrangements. If you are interested, please contact Tony (lowe.tony@yahoo.co.uk)

A visit with tour and lunch at Treguddick Spirit Distillery. Postponed until later this year. -



Trad Jazz
Coordinator:
Mike Barlow

We had a very good evening at the Jubilee Hall in Langford Budville with Ron King's New Riverside Jazz Band. The leader as

well as playing the trumpet played a couple of excellent numbers on his harmonica. Clarinets are supposed to have a wooden carcass but the picture shows an American Army clarinet made from metal. Another first for the jazz aficionados! ~ *Mike*

Jazz, but not Jazz On Wed 18th March we saw a new group filling in for the band who could not make it at Magelake. They were the Hot House Combo from Totnes and they did explain that they were not really jazz, but more eclectic. There were hints of Parisian Hot House Style music, Cuban rhythms and some beautiful whistling. There were familiar song writers such as Django Reinhardt, but also some of their own compositions. Instruments included a customised washboard, an accordion, trumpet, clarinet and trombone as well as the usual guitar and double bass. All of which combined to create a lively and highly recommended evening of entertainment. ~ *Maggie*



Line Dancing
Coordinator:
Mich Bowers

At our last session on Feb 9th we had a goodly number who all made a brave effort, to master some new dances, despite a few 'mishaps' (ie mistakes) made by me. Apologies all round, but if you can laugh at my errors, I don't mind, and laughing is good exercise! - Mich



Local Theatre
Coordinator:
Betty Thrall

The Tiverton Dramatic Society Play is Agatha Christies "THE UNEXPECTED GUEST" 7-30 pm New Hall our block booking is Thursday April 16th Tickets £11-50 p ,please pay at the AGM march 26th .

The Annual Variety Show in aid of Devon Air

Ambulance Trust is Saturday May 9th Tickets £13 children under 16 £8 .The concert comprises Song ,comedy ,Dance ,Instrumentalist ,and Special Acts ,always a good evenings entertainment of local and surrounding district Talent .Please pay for your tickets at the AGM March 26th Cheques to be made payable to Tivertonu3a .Also Sue our Treasurer will have the card machine ,but always write your name on my list and write paid by card at the side .

"SEUSSUCAL"

10 of us enjoyed the Junior Operatic Clubs performance of Seussical. It is one of the most performed shows in America, it was described as a fantastical, magical musical extravaganza and it certainly was performed by the cast of 22 with great energy & colourful costumes. Thanks go to the choreographer, musical director, orchestra ,although rather too loud) Those responsible for the scenery etc. The characters' Jo Jo ,Cat in the Hat ,Horton the Elephant all came alive & who could fail to be awed by the elephant with wings hatching out of

the egg .It was an amazing performance ,what a shame so few of us went .It was a full house the night we went .Our local talent ,especially the youth really do need supporting .

Betty 01844 242998 (we have call minder so remember to say u3a before your name)



This months photo subject was "water". There were some nice pictures of ponds, lakes and coastal views, some with wildlife, plus some more unusual ones. Some of these were ice on car roof after rain, elongated water droplets from a tap,

condensation water drops on underside of a glass saucepan lid and thick fog. One member showed a waterfall cascading from a cliff top onto the beach below east of Watchet (St Audrie's Falls) Our next subject is "emergence of spring"

I still have a quantity of free photographic equipment to give away, mainly tripods and flash guns. please contact me on 07703 483697 if interested. *Charlie*



Railway Group

Coordinator:
Jose Kimber

Our last meeting in February was hosted by Eric again as building work continues on my house. There were only four of us this time, the group has fewer regular attendees these days. We watched two DVDs, a Pathe Look At Life and a Pathe

Pictorial. There was a bit of duplication, but they were still very interesting and gave a good insight into the social life of the times. Those that were made in the 50's took us back to the time, which we could all remember!

Unfortunately, I have had to cancel the March meeting which was scheduled for 27 March, because my kitchen worktops are finally being fitted on that day, and I have to be here, and the following Friday is Good Friday.

Our next meeting will be on Friday 24 April at 10.30am, and will be at my house. I will e-mail regular group members as usual but if you are interested in joining us, please contact me for the details. We would really welcome more regular attendees!

Jose



Ramblers
Coordinator:
Jenny Bedford

The March Ramble started near Wellington. After a few minutes of suburbia, we were out into open countryside and following the remains of the Grand Western Canal. Our banana break was taken next to the remains of the Nynehead boat lift.

This was a pioneering 1830s vertical lift system designed by James Green to raise tub boats 24ft. It was part of the first commercially successful, balanced lift system in Britain, predating the Anderton Lift. Only the Nynehead lift remnants remain of the original seven.

Then through the grounds of the rather splendid Nynehead Court, now a seemingly luxurious home for the elderly. Crossing the fields of the Nynehead estate, we returned to the canal and retraced our steps to the cars. Debrief was held in the adjacent coffee bar or, for those with a more substantial thirst, in the Globe Inn at Sampford Peveril.



Remains of the Nynehead boat lift

Thanks to Peter for competently leading the walk. *Nigel*

The Ramble on **Tuesday 14th April** will be led by Phil Stone at Killerton House (EX5 3LE) starting at 10 am. from the Visitor car park (National Trust card or pay). The approx. 4 mile walk is on fields and tracks with some gentle slopes, which are not strenuous. Some mud is likely owing to the winter heavy rain. There are refreshments available afterwards in the cafe.
Jenny



Skittles
Coordinator:
Janet Loader

There will be no meeting on Monday 6th April (Happy Easter) and our final day of play will be Monday 27th April.

- *Janet*



Snooker
Coordinator:
John Anderson

A small, social group catering for various levels of Snooker ability (up to, but not exceeding, "average"!).

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

check with John when messaging (see below)]. John is a keyholder for opening up, so give John a message [e- mail/text/whatsapp, or even phone!] beforehand if you would like to join in and have a game or two - *John*. Tel: 07947 000757



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

Our regular band of enthusiastic players continues to enjoy plenty of exercise, friendly competition, close line calls and loads of fun every Friday from 10 - 11.30am at Uplowman Village Hall.

Time certainly flies because this month we are celebrating the 1st anniversary of our group's founding and we plan to mark this shortly with a special session. Many thanks to everyone who helped me bring this idea successfully to court.



anyone would like further information please contact Di Lewis on 07713 311616.



Short Trek

Coordinator:
Phil Akers

Our short trek group enjoyed a lovely 6.5 mile route around Holcombe Rogus. Expertly led by Kelvin 11 regulars were joined by a new member Mike who fitted in seamlessly. Starting at Beech car park the route followed the Great Western Canal to Burlescombe. From here we followed the disused railway line to Westleigh Quarry. A couple of information boards along the line explained the

history of the quarry from its origins to its continued use today. The trek continued through farms and fields and passed the ruins of Canonsleigh Priory, an Augustinian nunnery founded in the 12th century which was built with stone from Westleigh Quarry. Following all the recent rain, trekkers were dressed for more of the same but the sun did shine for us at times meaning most trekkers had to peel off some layers. The route continued into Holcombe Rogus and on to Twitchen. From here we ascended our only significant climb of the trek and were treated to wonderful far reaching views with Wellington Monument on the horizon. At Waterslade we looped back to Holcombe Rogus. Numerous fields led us through Whipcott Farm and onto Whipcott itself. From here we joined the canal towpath again to return to the car park completing a trek in essence roughly a figure of eight. The debrief was held at the Globe Inn at Sampford Peverell. - *Kelvin*



The short trek on **Friday 27th March** is on Dartmoor starting from the carpark on the road at the base of Hound Tor. The walk takes us over the Tor down to Beckaford Bridge and Becky Falls with a lunch stop on the green at Manaton then we ascend the hill towards Bowerman's Nose and back to the carpark. Prompt start at 10am please.

Starting point. SX739 792
what3words ///mashing.issue.catchers
Distance. 7 miles. Ascent. 1300 ft

The short trek on **Friday 24th April** will be led by Andrea starting from the small car park next to the River Barle in Withypool on Exmoor. The walk will be around 7.5 miles to Tarr Steps and back, along both sides of the river. - *Phil*



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

Mike Warren kindly hosted us to discuss Collective Memories. Roger Strickland, had suggested "Social construct of Reality" by Berger and Luckmann as an introductory text: this led to a discussion covering sociology, philosophy and politics. As always there were also personal anecdotes, including family traditions and names for grandparents,

Our next meeting will be at 2pm on April 16th when we will discuss **Protest**: why and how. Details: EuniceHinds@gmail.com



Thursday Lunch

Coordinator:
Angie Cheshire

The March meeting of the Thursday lunch group was held in the Ponte Vecchio Italian restaurant in Tiverton, attended by fifteen members. Although we did not have to pre-order, the food was presented speedily by the always-friendly staff. Dishes were copious and

universally tasty, with delicious Italian desserts for many. This restaurant is deservedly popular, and whilst this sometimes means rather challenging noise levels, it is an indicator of quality food and service. ~ *Carol & Nigel*

Our next outing is to The Martlett Inn, Langford Budville, organised by Jill. Pre-ordering is requested and the menu will be sent to the members who sign up. Let me know if you want to be added. *Angie*



Trekking Coordinator: Gordon Cleaver

March 2026 Long Trek – Branscombe and Beer.

12 Trekkers met in the picture postcard village of Branscombe for a 10 mile Trek along the stunning Jurassic coast in the sunshine. Excellently led by Mike W we went on a figure of 8 walking loop taking in Beer Head and Beer before returning to

Branscombe for our Lunch break . After lunch we headed westwards along Berry Cliffs to Berry Camp before returning to the cars.

The main incident of the Trek was when major surgery was required on a Trekkers boot when his sole became detached. The new first aid kit was opened and the detached sole was fixed with copious amounts of bandage and tape. Of course the rest of the trek was punctuated with Puns about Sole and Soul .

The Debrief was held in the thatched Masons Arms in the Village.



April Long Trek –Thursday 2nd April 2026 -10.00am Start car park on the road to Meldon Quarry.,Nr Okehampton

The April Trek will be led by Gordon and will see us venture to Dartmoor for the first time of 2026 .Starting from the car park on the minor road to Meldon Quarry (SX567 930 W3W: holly.protrude.uppermost) we will first climb up through Bluebell Woods before traversing Meldon Viaduct and over Meldon Dam. We then get out onto Dartmoor proper going up Black Down then to Culliver Steps We will follow the river down through Halstock woods before passing Okehampton Castle and the through the golf club back to the cars. A very varied trek of about 10.4 miles.

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



Wednesday Pub Lunch

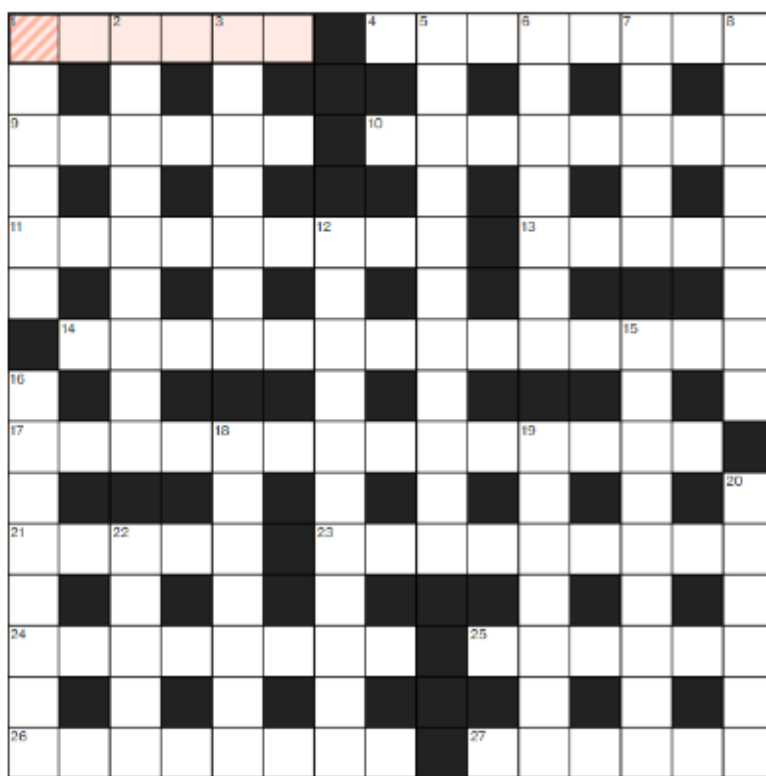
Coordinator:
Trevor Ellmore

As Margaret and I did not attend the March venue at the Anchor Inn Exebridge, Graham reported back that the food was very good and enjoyed by all on a very pleasant day weather wise.

Our next venue is at the Blue Ball Sampford Moor on the 1st April so if you did not put your name down at the last meet and would like to attend, please contact me ASAP. - *Trevor*



Cryptic Crossword #55 March / April 2026 (Solution at end of newsletter)



Across

- 1 Alter course and branch off (6)
- 4 Not enough for Noah's Ark! (3,2,3)
- 9 Diligently, and at the right moment (2,4)
- 10 I'm wise, but not right. It's rude (8)
- 11 French on, levered off, shocked! (9)
- 13 Cautious he was somewhat chastened & somewhat wary (5)
- 14 Not a pie and linked to Alsace (6,8)
- 17 Inspection by the Police (8,6)
- 21 Missing a bit of charisma but might bring you luck (5)
- 23 The French , after slow progress, gave us an historical account (9)
- 24 Nothing underneath, mostly! (5,3)
- 25 The ecru osier has the root from the East (6)
- 26 Walt's baby babbles when adults away (3,5)
- 27 Tell me, quick! (6)

Down

- 1 Bewildered starter changes direction, locates companion (6)
- 2 Bury Lucy French of Pause (8)
- 3 Fabric starts crimson and magenta, becomes red in colour
- 5 He's an eliminator of one's designation (4,7)
- 6 Hard man at the door (7)
- 7 The age moment has the end all and be all from the South (5)
- 8 Quick, that gate's open! Not right? What, actually *pay!* (5,3)
- 12 An extravagant display of glasses, perhaps (11)
- 15 Unseemly behaviour in the last month, with zero spirit (9)
- 16 Diagram comprises a map, with something to eat (3,5)
- 18 Short measure of heat is French for storm (7)
- 19 Ran ahead of a dog that seemingly let you in, with bitterness (7)
- 20 Something wrong! Leave the country! (6)
- 22 Aunt started a game on newspapers years ago (5)

Groups not reporting this month are shown below. Coordinators details can be found on the web page



Board Games

Coordinator:
Dawn Ferguson



Photography

Coordinator:
Roger Gunn



Mahjong

Coordinator:
Celia Hicks

Cryptic Crossword #55 March / April 2026

