

Tiverton u3a Newsletter

learn, laugh, live

Volume 11 Issue 5

May /
June
2026



GENERAL MEETING

**Thursday 28th May
10 for 10.30am**

Brian Goodison-Blanks

**Head of Maritime Sport and Collectors Departments
of Bearnas Hampton & Littlewood**

“Life as an Auctioneer in Devon”

Tea coffee and biscuits as usual

Moorhayes Community Centre Lea Road Tiverton EX16 6SU

And for our next meeting.....

On Thursday 25th June

Tim Dyke

“Nooky at Number 10: Prime Ministers’ inamorata down the ages”

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Vice Chairman	Annie Foot	Tivertonu3avicechair@gmail.com
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Facebook <https://facebook.com/tivertonu3a>
Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/tivertonu3>

Tiverton u3a welcomes two new members this month

- Jane Rogers
- Janet Julian

FROM THE COMMITTEE

April General Meeting

As we say goodbye to the long winter months and hello to the warmer spring and summer months it's a great time to **Learn, Laugh, Live**. Whether it's visiting gardens or places of interest, playing games, learning new skills or just enjoying the company of others, your **u3a** provides that opportunity. Perhaps you know friends or neighbours who might enjoy being part of the Tiverton u3a. Why not encourage them to try us out, perhaps attending a monthly meeting as a guest.

Indeed, our monthly meetings always help us to learn more about the work and interests of others. April's meeting was no exception as we welcomed Peter Bangs from the Churches Housing Action Team (CHAT).

Peter began by reminding us that it was in 1995 that CHAT's founder Sally Chapman began to offer housing advice for those who had nowhere else to turn. Since that moment, CHAT has been working to see that everyone in Mid Devon has somewhere to call home.

Peter shared several examples of ways in which CHAT has helped and supported those with challenges ranging from homelessness, debt and food insecurity. Some of the statistics he shared were eye-opening. Last year CHAT helped people who had challenges with debt, which in Mid-Devon amounted to around £1.5m.

Peter's earlier career was based in Southampton where he told us that homelessness was very visible – people sleeping in doorways or in tents in an around the city. In Mid-Devon, he said, there are 20 people who might be described as homeless, but who are largely invisible!

It was clear from Peter's talk that CHAT provides vital support to those with challenges and does so in a way that enables them to rebuild their lives and retain their dignity.

Tony Jackson



If you missed the talk, or would like to hear it again, it can be downloaded from the following link

<https://youtu.be/zdv4nKfE0TU>

U3a National survey.

I hope you will have received an email from me advising of the survey initiated by the national u3a. Please consider replying to the survey as the results will certainly help the national u3a better understand members' thoughts and expectations which in turn may be helpful to our own u3a here in Tiverton.

Please click the link below to answer the survey:

[Inside u3a survey](#)

The survey takes around **15 minutes**, and your responses will be completely confidential. Please complete the survey by **Sunday 31 May**. You can enter a free **prize draw** to win high street shopping vouchers which can be used in many different retailers; five lucky winners will each win £100! Just leave your contact details at the end of the survey to take part.

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>

Meet and Greet team!

Would you like to join, our growing band of friendly welcoming members who are around at Monthly Meetings to welcome anyone new, or for the first time attending the meeting? We would love to recruit a few more members to join our team. We operate on a rotating basis so it wouldn't mean a commitment from you, to every meeting, unless you'd like to of course.

I'm sure we can all remember how daunting it can be coming into a new group not knowing anyone and feeling very alone.

The important role for the Meeters and Greeters, is to try to ensure that anyone new or coming to the meeting for the first time meets up with at least one, other member who knows about what we do and can introduce the person to the Interest Groups and others and generally make them welcome. We want everyone who comes through the door to feel they are welcomed and that this is a friendly place to be.

Do have a word with Annie Foot or any other member of the Committee, Group Co-ordinators or an existing Greeter at the next meeting. if you might be interested or want to know more.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Help Us Share Your Stories on the Tiverton u3a Facebook Page

As your Social Media Secretary, I'm always looking for ways to showcase the fantastic range of activities, achievements, and interests that make Tiverton u3a such a vibrant community—and I need your help!

Our Facebook page is a great place to celebrate what we do, keep members informed, and give others a glimpse of the variety of groups and events we enjoy. But it works best when it reflects *you*.

I'd love to receive content from both members and Group Coordinators for sharing on the page. This could include:

- Photos from group meetings, walks, or outings
- Short updates on recent activities
- Notices about upcoming events or spaces in your group
- Interesting snippets, achievements, or member stories
- Anything else you think others would enjoy seeing

If you're a Group Coordinator, regular updates from your group are especially valuable in helping us show the full breadth of u3a life.

There's no need for anything formal—a few sentences and a photo (if you have one) is perfect. Please just make sure you have permission from anyone featured in photos before sending them in.

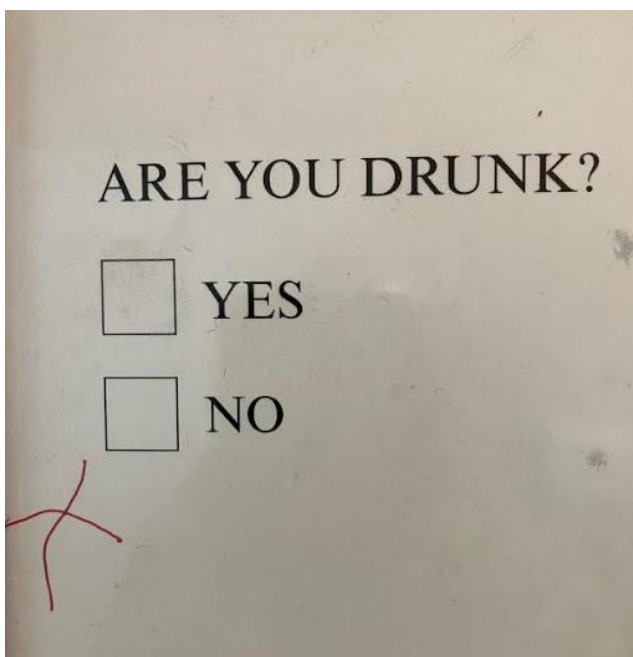
You can send your contributions to tivertonu3asocialmed@gmail.com and I'll take care of the rest.

Let's work together to make our Facebook page lively, engaging, and a true reflection of Tiverton u3a.

I look forward to seeing what you've been up to.

- Angie Cheshire. - Social Media Secretary

In view of the high cost of breathalyser tests, Devon police have introduced a questionnaire as an alternative



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NEW HOME "COVID TEST FOR 2026 🍷 😊

- 1 Pour yourself a large glass of red wine and try to smell it.**
- 2 If you can smell the wine, drink it and see if you can taste it.**
- 3 If you can taste and smell it – congratulations! It confirms you don't have Covid.**

Last night I did the test 19 times... and every result was negative, thank God! 🙏 😊

Tonight I'm going to run the test again, because this morning I woke up with a headache and feel like I might be coming down with something.

Wish me luck... I'm a bit nervous! 🍷 😊

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

Creative Writing gets even more creative!

At our last meeting some members departed from the chosen topics (Picnics or A Love Letter) and offered original works on "Lists" - both the written sort of shopping lists and the leaning type of listing! Add to that an amusing piece on a Traffic Report in Tiverton (a spoof on the national weather forecast)

and we all enjoyed the originality. Another piece about American visitors to an English village who discovered an ancestor from the First World War and his love letter home was quite a different interpretation of the topic.

We also tried to expand our English usage (and why not, when we have such a rich lexicon to draw on?) by finding our own, original collective nouns and similes which was much harder than you might think! But examples such as A Tantrum of Toddlers, An addition of numbers, A quire of authors seemed apposite, and A noisy bunch of teenagers, As weary as a marathon runner, as soft as a mossy duvet were among those that we discovered.

We continue to meet on the last Wednesday of the month, and we welcome any new members.

Nickie



Croquet

Coordinator:
Jean Brown

Tuesday May 5th saw the opening season of the Croquet Club when sixteen members played several rounds of croquet. Besides the cawing of the rooks there was the pleasant echoing sound of the clunk of the mallet striking the ball.

Everyone had an enjoyable time, and new members are always given encouragement and

a warm welcome. We meet every Tuesday at the Heathcoat Cricket ground, though times and days may vary due to the Cricket clubs commitments.

You can Contact Jean.07949520504 or email jeanmbrown14@gmail.com for further information.
Jean



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 at end of the newsletter, as usual. Hope you have fun cracking those clues.

Graeme.

(cozensg@yahoo.co.uk)



Economics

Coordinator:
Mike Barlow

We had another interesting set of discussions in May. The first was looking at the Economic indicators based on articles in the Spectator and was led by John. Despite some confusion about definitions, it seems that whilst the tax burden has increased, Disposable Income has also grown over the last decades. As we've said in previous meetings the feel good factor is

somehow missing !

Our second discussions, led by Tony J looked at Local Government (LG) Finances. One of the main takeaways was that funding from Central Government is reassessed every year and therefore makes long term planning extremely challenging. Devon County Council receive about half their funds from Central Government whereas Mid Devon District Council's main source of funds is Council Tax. The statutory services that they are required to provide are becoming increasingly difficult to provide within the available budgets,

We will not meet in June due to a number of conflicts but will meet on Wed 1st July - more details later.

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



Ten members visited The Italian Garden at Great Ambrook, Ipplepen on 8th May for a guided tour. It's an extraordinary, secluded place on the edge of Dartmoor, which was lost for decades and re-discovered in the 1980's after years of neglect. Originally completed in 1912, it has a fascinating history and magical quality. In lovely sunny weather we explored the 4.5 acres



with the help of our guide who explained the ongoing restoration project. At the end of our tour we were given the opportunity to buy plants and honey from their own beehives.

Our next meeting: **Kentisbeare House, NGS** , Listed former rectory redesigned and replanted in recent years.
Saturday 30th May, meet 11.00 am by the ticket table. £6.
Please let me know if you are coming

Margaret



German Conversation

Coordinator:
John Smith.

The Group has met on two occasions during May. As usual, we start with some unusual words and proverbs and German jokes (yes, they exist) and interesting facts about German.

You will know, I am sure, the colours of the German flag and, possibly, their position on the flag (black, red, gold). Do you know what these colours signify? The

colours symbolise unity and freedom of the people. Out of the blackness (black) of servitude through bloody (red) battles into the golden (gold) light of freedom.

We then talk about any item of interest or recent experiences of those attending - *John*



Going Places

Coordinators:
John O'Connor
Tony Lowe, Chris Steele

Burnham-on-Sea Hovercraft Rescue Service

Our group enjoyed a fascinating visit to the BARB Search and Rescue Centre earlier this month.

Founded in 1992 and based on the seafront at Burnham-on-Sea, BARB

Search & Rescue is an independent charity run by a dedicated team of local volunteers. The organisation operates two rescue hovercraft and two inshore rescue boats, with crews on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Over the years, the team has saved hundreds of lives while responding to a wide range of emergencies.

During our visit, we were given an excellent presentation covering the history of the service and the vital role it plays in an area known for its dangerous mudflats. We also had the opportunity to climb aboard one of the static hovercraft and take a closer look at the controls — although a ride across the sands was unfortunately not included!

We would like to thank the friendly BARB team for welcoming us so warmly and for generously giving up their time to explain the important work that they do – *Tony*



A trip to the Somerset Earth Science Centre and Whatley Quarry

We are looking for expressions of interest in a visit to the Somerset Earth Science Centre and nearby Whatley Quarry on Tuesday 28th July.

The Somerset Earth Science Centre (SESC) near Radstock is an award-winning, purpose-built educational facility, which serves as a hub for learning about the geology, geography, and ecology of the Mendip Hills.

Whatley Quarry is a major limestone extraction site located near Frome in Somerset. As one of the UK's largest quarries covering 173 hectares, it produces approximately 6 million tonnes of aggregate annually.

Our programme for the day will include:

- A presentation on Mendip Geology and Quarrying
- A minibus tour of Whatley Limestone Quarry with an option to view blasting, if time permits
- Viewing the centre's mineral and fossil collections

The charge for the visit will be £15 per person and numbers are strictly limited. Please note – this is a car-share event, so you will need to make your own travel arrangements.

If you are interested, please contact me – *Tony* (lowe.tony@yahoo.co.uk).

A visit with tour and lunch at Treguddick Spirit Distillery

Postponed until later this year.



really need to keep the numbers up to ensure this genre continues.

Joe Trudgeon's Trad Jazz Troubadours performed at Magelake.

The Richard Leach Street Band (pictured) gave us an excellent evening of 1920s/1930s jazz in front of a rather reduced audience in Langford Budville - we



June sessions include:

Wed 10th June **Spats Langham's Hot Fingers with Emily** at the Jubilee Hall in Langford Budville - always very entertaining!!

Wed 17th June **Gordon's Algiers Strutters** at the Magelake Hall in Uffculme

So get off the sofa and enjoy some live music.

Mike Barlow



Line Dancing

**Coordinator:
Mich Bowers**

There will be no dancing on Monday 25th May, being a Bank holiday. Next sessions are June 8th and 22nd..

Nothing much else to say, look forward to seeing y'all!



Local Theatre

**Coordinator:
Betty Thrall**

Our next block booking is for Tiverton Amateur Operatic Society Production of "WE WILL ROCK YOU" Thursday September 17th , 7-30 pm New Hall. Tickets £12 each Those of us who went to the Variety Show recently saw an excerpt of this show, which included an excellent singing of Bohemian

Rhapsody. It certainly whet our appetites to want to see more. Look out for more details in the next Newsletter,. There will be a list to put your names on at the June 25th monthly meeting

Disappointingly, only 8 of us went to The Spring Variety Show, which was most enjoyable - singing, dancing, music, comedy, so lots of laughs, clapping along and an opportunity to join in the singing.

Withleigh Farmers supplied refreshments. Also, Ice-creams in the interval were very welcome. All proceeds, and refreshments were given free so are goodly amount was raised for Devon Air Ambulance Trust.

A very successful evening organised by Rose Chanin and Friends

Betty. 01884 242998 (a call minder on this phone. Please say U3A before your name)



Mahjong

**Coordinator:
Celia Hicks**

Any new or existing players of Mahjong would be very welcome to join us.

We play on alternate Friday afternoons local to Tiverton.

Please contact me celiahicks13@gmail.com to learn more



Railway Group

**Coordinator:
Jose Kimber**

Our May meeting took place on 22 May, just in time to write this report. We watched a fascinating DVD about inclines on the railway, and trains struggling to get up them, floored by an item about signalling, both historic and more modern, though there have been

many changes since this film was made, not least of which is the current system of control in the locomotive. Attendance was rather low with only four of us this time.

We also discussed possible outings in June, and the favoured options seem to be either a visit to the West Somerset Railway, travelling to Minehead, then breaking the journey on the way back at Watchet, or a visit to the Paignton-Kingswear line and trip on the river Dart. I will be investigating both these options and will e-mail group members with details and possible dates.

If anyone who is not on my e-mail list and who would like to go on a visit, please contact me and I will send you the details once we have confirmed them.

We also plan to visit Okehampton later in the year when the new station is open, and another visit to the Launceston Steam Railway.

Our June meeting will be on Friday 26 June, 10.30am, when we will be watching another DVD to be selected by the group. - Jose



Ramblers

**Coordinator:
Jenny Bedford**

For the May 12th Cadeleigh Ramble, thirteen of us assembled in the Fisherman's Cot. Following Nigel's plan to avoid conflict with another group using the small car park in Cadeleigh, a few cars ferried all the walkers up the hill. The weather remained largely favourable so we had good views on the undulating fields to Round Wood. Passing the wood, we successfully negotiated the slightly swollen stream crossing, then toiled

diagonally up the steep hill to East Ridge, from whence going downhill to Little Silver was quite a relief. The remainder of the walk, along the valley of the Little Dart, apart from the permanent small bog was easy and we rejoined the road to return to the Fisherman's Cot. The drivers were

then taken back to Cadeleigh to retrieve their cars. Thanks to Nigel for an interesting walk with plenty of variety.



Ramble Tuesday 9th June

The next Ramble will be led by Angie, starting from the car park at Clatworthy reservoir. The easy five mile route has constantly changing views of water, woodland and open countryside. There are a few gentle inclines but nothing too demanding and there are benches along the way for a rest or banana break.

As a matter of historical interest the creation of the reservoir between 1959 and 1960 involved the flooding of the ancient settlement of Syndercombe and was opened in July 1961 by Princess Alexandra of Kent.



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 and banter, close line calls and loads of fun every Friday from 10 to 11.30am at Uplowman Village Hall.

Time certainly flies because we have just celebrated the 1st anniversary of our group's founding. We marked this in typical style by parking our rackets for a while and enjoying chat, coffee, cake and nibbles at a special session. Thanks to our members for supporting me and for being such a friendly and engaging group.



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



Short Trek

Coordinator:
Phil Akers

The **April Short Trek** was an absolute delight! The 11 walkers were grateful for a beautiful, bright, sunny day to enhance the scenic beauty of the stretch of the River Barle between Withypool and Tarr Steps.

The uphill road route out of Withypool along Worth Lane is actually part of the Exe Valley Way, but not the most attractive part of the trek. Once that first lung busting hill was covered the rest was plain sailing. After a quick banana break at the ancient clapper bridge, we followed the diverted Two Moors Way along the western bank of the Barle.

Lunch was taken on a large felled log next to the river with dappled sunlight falling through the branches onto an extensive carpet of bluebells. Onto the impressive new timber and stone bridge and across the fields back to Withypool. Loyalties were divided between the village pub and the tea rooms after a very pleasant country walk

Many thanks to Andrea for planning and reconnaissance, even though she was unable to make it on the day.



The **Short Trek on Friday 22nd May** was led by **Tony L** and took us to the top of Raddon Hill near Thorverton. Full report and pictures in the next newsletter. - *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

The May discssion was unfortunately cancelled, due to a lack of participants. Our discussion of SATIRE will therefore be postponed until next month.

We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 2pm. Details: EuniceHinds@gmail.com



Thursday Lunch

Coordinator:
Angie Cheshire

Eighteen members lunched at The Butterleigh Inn on our outing on 14th May. It was an enjoyable one on the whole, but with a couple of hiccups regarding cold food which wasn't resolved satisfactorily. Perhaps they're not used to catering for larger groups. A

pity, but it didn't dampen the spirits of the group as the chatter and conversations confirmed. All in all a good social gathering. ~ *Jan & Roger*

Our next outing is on 11th June, to Sheppy's Cider Apple Bay Restaurant & Bar, Three Bridges, nr Taunton, TA4 1ER. Pre-ordering is required. I will write to all members nearer the time with the menu. - *Angie*



Trekking

Coordinator:
Gordon Cleaver

May Long Trek – Baggly Point

15 Trekkers set off from the National Trust Car park at Baggly Point for an excellent sunny seaside trek ably led by Tony L. We had stunning coastal views from the coastpath and whilst no dolphins or seals were

spotted we were treated to some "Poledancing" by two members of the group who ascended the Coastguard Lookout Pole. After a stiff climb up and over Woolacombe Down we lunched overlooking the extensive Woolacombe Beach. It was then down through the dunes for a good walk along the beach to Putsborough. Climbing Middleborough Hill, we learned about how the Airforce practiced attacking U Boats in WW2 before returning to the cars. The well attended debrief was held in the Manor House Inn, Croyde where Tony was thanked for leading a great Trek.



June Long Trek –Thursday 4th June 2026 -10.00am Start County Gate Car Park.

The June Long Trek will be led by Roger G and will take us through some fine scenery on the North Devon coast. Starting from County Gate Carpark, EX35 6NY, SS795 486 on the A39 we head eastwards ward towards Broomstreet until we meet the coastal path and head back towards Foreland point when we head inland on the homeward leg. This is a coastal walk so expect some ups and downs! Distance 10 miles Ascent 600 metres Great views.

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



Wednesday Pub Lunch

Coordinator:
Trevor Ellmore

As usual our visit to the Keepers Cottage on the 6th May was a success with 20 of us attending and only one cancellation on the day due to sickness.



Our Venue for 3rd June is at Ville Verde an Italian Restaurant at Rockwell Green; We last went there in September 2025 which happened to be our first visit and was enjoyed by all. If you did not put your name down in May and would like to attend, please contact me ASAP. - Trevor

Cryptic Crossword #57 May / June 2026 (Solution at end of newsletter)



Across

- 5 Funny venue (4,4)
- 8 Pop's major dictionary does not support this word (6)
- 10 If crab gets mixed up it will make fibres (6)
- 11 Hooked on work of note, though stops for tea (8)
- 12 Better than a Major & better than a pole but get the work done! (7,5)
- 15 Initially it's one of the roles of the agenda? (4)
- 17 He who did this, won! (5)
- 18 I miss film star Michael but it's rough justice (4)
- 19 Illogically, supporter follows allocation of international Iranian number plates (12)
- 22 Coins do not constitute easy money (4,4)
- 24 Cream, maybe! Helpfully within easy reach to restore softness (2,4)
- 25 Top crackpots disagreeing where to drink (6)
- 26 Pit vipers heard making metallic sound (8)

Down

- 1 Many people eventually land up in one of these! (6)
- 2 Rowan's a dark ~~horse~~ snake! (10)
- 3 Sounds like double stitching is only average (2-2)
- 4 Short species and fickle is quite distinct (8)
- 6 Forcefully persuaded but used for support (6,2)
- 7 Bet on the itcher to provide a grooming tool! (4, 9)
- 9 Right-leaning sissies in turmoil (4)
- 13 Defeated, general hands fort over first, etc (3,2,5)
- 14 Short sentence for a big ship (3-5)
- 16 Fall after sour sweet (4,4)
- 20 Have no break in a long time – temporarily (6)
- 21 This lady could be senile! (4)
- 23 This maniac never got spotted (4)

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



Board Games

Coordinator:
Dawn Ferguson



Skittles

Coordinator:
Janet Loader



Photography 2

Coordinator:
Charlie Duke



Photography

Coordinator:
Roger Gunn

Cryptic Crossword #57 May / June 2026

