

2019 Cryptic Crosswords Records

Week 51: Thursday 19th December 2019

This was the final meeting of the year, so a few mince pies were required to help us cope with the more difficult crosswords that we now have to contend with. We welcomed a new member, Sue Owen. We are now halfway through SUN Book 3 and we have all noticed that they are much more challenging. Instead, we worked through 'Country Walking Cryptic Crossword November 2019 brought by Steve H. This was more manageable and we decided to do another one from this magazine at our next meeting.

As usual, we came across a number of anagram clue indicators – wrong, anew, new plan, redeveloping, broke, transformation, unexpectedly, poor.

For once, we did not come across any especially interesting or unusual words.

Homework: Try to complete SUN crossword 87. This is probably enough at this time of year!

Next Meeting : Thursday 2nd January 2020 at the usual time and place.

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Week 50: Thursday 5th December 2019

We had nearly full attendance today, so we were all sitting in cosy fashion around the table. We worked through our homework – SUN crosswords 84 & 85.

Homework : try to complete SUN crosswords 86 & 87

Next meeting: Thursday 19th December at the usual time and place

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Week 49: Thursday 21st November 2019

We have now reached the half-way mark in the SUN Two-Speed Crossword Book – Collection 3, and don't we know it! It seems we now have a different compiler who seems to have a fondness for religious clues amongst others. No doubt we will eventually become familiar with his way with words.

We finished off crossword 80 and worked our way through crosswords 81 & 82.

Yet more words for indicating anagrams came to our notice: batty, maladjusted, wily, troubled, switch, creator, kind of, spoiled. The list goes on and on.

Today we were particularly interested in:

Oran: a city port in NW Algeria.

Anona: a girl's name of Latin origin, meaning 'of the harvest'. The name of the Roman goddess of the harvest.

Testate: having a valid Will before death.

Signally: means 'to a conspicuous degree', notably, remarkably. A new word for most of us.

Homework: Finish Crossword 83 and then try to complete Crosswords 84 & 85.

Next meeting: Thursday, December 5th at the usual time and place.

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Week 48: Thursday 7th November 2019

We had an almost full house today and space around the table was at a premium! Today we worked through homework SUN crosswords 78 & 79 and commenced work on 80.

As always, some words stimulated our interest and generated much conversation:

Whilst 'scrambled egg' may be some people's choice of a snack, in today's clue, it actually referred to the gold braid found on a Naval Officer's cap. Not all of us knew that!

Then came 'debus'. And yes, it does mean to get off a bus. Perhaps I can use this word when I get off the Pronto tomorrow?

I think that 'psaltery' stumped us all. Psaltery, (from Greek psaltērion: "harp"), musical instrument having plucked strings of gut, horsehair, or metal stretched across a flat soundboard, often trapezoidal but also rectangular, triangular, or wing-shaped. The strings are open, none being stopped to produce different notes.

After that came 'Potable'. Drinking water, also known as potable water, is water that is safe to drink or to use for food preparation. The amount of drinking water required to maintain good health varies, and depends

on physical activity level, age, health-related issues, and environmental conditions.

Homework: Complete SUN crossword 80 and attempt crosswords 81 & 82. Steve has prepared a new template, now being uploaded onto our site, for crosswords 81 and above. We believe the crosswords are about to become more difficult!

Next Meeting: Thursday: 21st November at the usual time and place. December meetings will be on 5th and 19th.

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Week 47: Thursday 17th October 2019

Nine of us crowded around the table today. We were without Sue B our facilitator, but everyone rose to the challenge and helped each other out.

We worked through our homework, SUN crosswords 75 & 76, and then almost completed crossword 77.

As always, new word clues that suggest an anagram answer came to our attention. This time they were: 'demise', 'fractured' and 'break'.

Interesting words included:

'Dogwatch': most of us were unaware that this word refers to either of two short watches on a ship, 4-6pm or 6-8pm.

'Lye': A lye is a metal hydroxide traditionally obtained by leaching ashes, or a strong alkali which is highly soluble in water producing caustic basic solutions. Used in cleaning.

We knew that a 'snob' is a person who believes that their tastes in a particular area are superior to those of other people, for example, "a musical snob". However, in this case, it referred to a 'cobbler'.

'Rumble': (1) 'make a continuous deep, resonant sound'. (2) discover (an illicit activity or its perpetrator).

'Pan' can be used as a synonym for 'castigate' i.e 'the music was panned by critics'.

Homework: Complete SUN crosswords 78 and 79

Next meeting: Thursday 7th November, usual time and place.

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Week 46 : Thursday 3rd October 2019

We had a busy morning working our way through our homework - SUN crosswords 72 & 73. We then moved on to 74 and started 75 As usual

we became aware of several new words used to suggest an anagram clue – force, improperly, amends, works. 'Reportedly' suggests a homophone.

We?? encountered some interesting clue words.

1. 'Dub' for example can mean (a) genre of electronic music that grew out of reggae (b) give an unofficial name or nickname?? (c) dress (an artificial fishing fly) with, say, strands of fur or wool

2. 'Boabab'. 'Adansonia' is a genus of deciduous trees known as baobabs. They are found in arid regions of Madagascar, Africa, Arabia and Australia. They are the subject of a chapter in Le Petit Prince by Anton de St. Exup??ry.

3. 'An Erne', we remembered, is a sea eagle.

4. 'Oncer'. This noun can mean (a) a one-pound note (historical), (b) a person who does a particular thing only once and (c) a person obsessed by the film Once Upon a Time.

5. We reminded ourselves that a 'Beadle' is a ceremonial officer of a church, college or similar institution.

Homework: SUN crosswords 75 & 76 Next meeting: Thursday 17th October 2017 at the usual time and place.

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Week 45: Thursday 19th September 2019

We were all very pleased with the response to our part in the Groups' Showcase. Thank you everyone. Next year a special quiz in the Church? A tableful of cruciverbalists were kept busy today. First of all we worked our way through our homework: SUN crosswords 70 and 71. As is often the case, we stumbled upon a number of 'new' words used to indicate an anagram clue. The list included 'demented', 'cocktail', 'causes trouble', 'crosses', to highlight a few.

As always, a few new words bring us pleasure! We were interested to learn that 'gyp' as a verb means to cheat or to swindle, and it can also be used as a noun meaning an act of swindling someone.

We were reminded of the Latin verb 'credo' to believe.

'Sere' is an adjective meaning dry or withered in relation to vegetation.

Once again, the measurement 'em' appeared in a clue. It relates to font size. We should know this by now!

We were reminded that 'entrée can mean the main course of a meal, and can also mean the right to entry into a sphere or group.

Homework: Finish SUN crossword 72 and try to complete crossword 73
Next meeting: Thursday 3rd October as usual.

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Week 44 : Thursday 5th September 2019

Homework: Finish SUN crosswords 70 and 71.

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Tuesday 10th September 2019: Annual Group Presentations

A big 'Thank you' to all the Cryptic Crossword group members for their help at our 'stand'. A special 'Thank you' to Sue Butler our Facilitator and Sue White, our photographer!

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Week 43: Thursday 15th August 2019

We had an industrious crowd around the table today. We worked through SUN crosswords 66, 67 and 68 before the time ran out. Regular readers will know that we are always interested in new words, etc. Today we added ITA, nostrum and ecarte to our list.??

ITA: Independent Television Association. The ITA was an agency created by the Television Act 1954 to supervise the creation of Independent Television (ITV), the first commercial network in the UK.

Ecarte??: a French casino game that is still played today. It is a two-player game, the word literally meaning discarded.

Nostrum: this word relates to a medicine, usually not considered effective, prepared by an unqualified person, a charlatan. It has another meaning - a scheme or remedy for bringing about?? some social or political reform or improvement.??

Homework:

1. Revisit Practice Puzzle 2, page 45 in Learn How to Solve Cryptic Crosswords. A Course for Beginners by Henry Howarth.??
2. SUN crossword 69.

Next meeting: Thursday 5th September

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Week 42: Thursday 1st August 2019

We had a table-full of members today and a lot of work was done. We went through our homework, SUN crosswords 63, 64 & 65 and as always, this created many lively discussions.

An interesting number of anagram indicators made themselves know to us.?? For example, we found rejoin, awkward, dilapidated, other, unsettled and elsewhere.

Of special interest was the clue: Peasant meets university Indian (5). The answer was 'Hindu'. The 'u' was easily explained by a clue word 'University'. The 'hind' was more of a challenge - indeed no-one could convincingly explain how peasant could be substituted by 'hind'. Neither 'hind' nor 'peasant' synonyms could explain the wordplay. We cordially invite our followers to offer their own solutions!

Homework: Finish SUN crossword 66, and try to complete 67 & 68.

Next meeting: Thursday 18th August, usual time and place.

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Week 41: Thursday 18th July 2019

We busied ourselves working through the homework, SUN crosswords 61 & 62.

As usual, a number of words brought themselves to our notice during the morning. In particular:

Nacelle: a streamlined casing on the outside of an aircraft or motor vehicle, especially one housing an aircraft engine, or the passenger compartment of an airship.

Nesh: an English dialect adjective??meaning??'unusually susceptible to cold weather' and there is no synonym for this use. ... The word comes from Old English hnesce??meaning??feeble, weak, or infirm and is a cognate with the 16th century Dutch word nesch typically??meaning??damp or foolish. It is apparently used in the Mansfield area although I have not heard it myself.

Nankeen: Nankeen??cloth is a kind of pale yellowish cloth, originally made at Nanjing, China from a yellow variety of cotton, but

subsequently manufactured from ordinary cotton that is then dyed. Also in the plural a piece or variety of this cloth.

In addition we came across a number of words used to indicate an anagram clue. For example: around, criminal, crushed, brewed, badly.

Homework: SUN crosswords 63, 64 and 65.

Next meeting: Thursday 1st August at the usual time and place.

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Week 40: Wednesday 4th July 2019

I am not sure if there is a collective noun for a group of cruciverbalists, but if not, may I suggest a 'table-full'? We certainly had a table full today! We worked our way carefully through SUN crosswords 59 & 60 unpicking?? the construction of the clues. It was good practice. Sue B has suggested that we try a Daily Mail crossword from time to time so that we appreciate the different styles of compilers.

Only two words encouraged deeper discussion.

1. The word 'simper' was the answer to the definition 'grimace'. This was queried by some and on further inspection it does seem that the words are not synonyms.

Simper - a smile affected by a coy or ingratiating manner; an artificial smile; to smile in a rather silly way. A 'grimace' on the other hand, is described as an 'ugly or twisted expression on a person's face, expressing typically disgust, pain or wry amusement'.

2. 'Transom' was the answer to the clue 'over-door beam'. We all thought of 'intel', but the answer was 'transom'. Many of the references related to the stern of boats, but it does seem that it is a 'strengthening crossbar, in particular, one set above a window or door'. Our group will be part of the RU3A Group Activity Display after the meeting on September 10th

Homework: Sun Crosswords 61 & 62.

Next meeting: Thursday 18th July at the usual time and place.

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Week 39: Thursday 20th June 2019

We were a small group of four today and so we all stepped up to the mark and made our contributions - no place to hide!

We worked collectively through our homework, Sun Crossword 56, and

made good progress on 58.

As usual, several 'new' words came to our attention:

1. We had all forgotten that a Dragonfly larva is a 'nymph'.
2. We reminded ourselves that a housing benefit can be a pension – 'la pension' being French for an 'allocation', a guesthouse.
3. Sowhat is a 'brad'? : it seems that 'Brad nailers use what are called brads (hence the name). Brads are essentially a thinner gauge of nail used to attach lightweight trim. The great advantage of using a brad nailer vs finish nailer is that because brads are thin gauged and the head is much smaller, you won't have to use wood putty to cover the hole'. That's very interesting to know!

Homework: Try to complete Sun crosswords 59 & 60.

Next meeting: Thursday 4th July at the usual time and place

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Week 38: Thursday 6th June 2019

Quite a few members were away this week but six of us were soon at work, wrestling with the last meeting's homework.

We steadily worked our way through Sun crosswords 54 and 55. Sue B, our facilitator was away on holiday, so we needed to be more self reliant! Fortunately, collaboration between the?? group ensured that almost all clues could be explained logically. We made a start on Sun crossword 56 but time caught up with us.

Of course, we are always interested in unusual, interesting or infrequently used words.

1. One member, who prefers anonymity (and may have led a sheltered life), was not familiar with the term 'airhead'. She is better informed now. The term refers to a 'simpleton'. Enough said!
2. There was considerable interest in the word 'holdfast'. It can refer to:
 - 2.1. A firm grip
 - 2.2. A staple or clamp securing an object
 - 2.3. In biology – it refers to a stalked organ by which an alga or simple aquatic plant i.e seaweed, or animal is attached to a substrate.
3. Oran. None of us were aware that Oran is a port in Algeria. Indeed it is the 2nd most important city in Algeria after Algiers due to its commercial, industrial and cultural importance.

Next meeting : Thursday 20th June 2019

Homework: Complete Sun crosswords 56 and 57.

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Week 37: Thursday 16th May 2019

We were quickly at work this morning, taking the morning to go over our previous homework.

Only two interesting / unusual words cropped up today.

Larrup: To thrash or whip (a person or animal). Old English, early 19C, possibly related to leather or lather.

Monza: is a city and commune on the River Lambro, a tributary of the Po in the Lombardy region of Italy. It is the capital of the province of Monza and Brianza. The Autodromo Nazionale Monza is a historic race track located near the city of Monza, north of Milan, in Italy. Built in 1922, it is the world's third purpose-built motor racing circuit after those of Brooklands and Indianapolis. The circuit's biggest event is the Formula One Italian Grand Prix. Wikipedia

Homework: SUN crosswords 54 & 55

Next meeting: Thursday 6th June 2019 at the GL's house.

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Week 36: Thursday 2nd May 2019

Three crosswords (our homework) were completed this morning. Firstly we started on the Daily Telegraph Cryptic Crossword, 10th March 2013 on page 148 of Henry Howarth's Workbook. This crossword proved an almost impossible challenge to many of the group. Slow and steady progress was made but it was with some cheer that we returned to our regular SUN Two-Speed Crossword book. These crosswords were completed in half the time.

Of interest was the word 'saw'. ??

1. As a noun it is a 'tool that has a blade with sharp points along one edge, used for cutting hard materials, such as wood or metal'.
2. As a verb: to cut with a saw. 'I sawed the end of a plank'.
3. A proverb or maxim as in 'Mum is always repeating the old saw 'Haste makes waste'. This term uses saw in the sense of 'saying' and old in the sense of 'wise' rather than old-fashioned.

We reminded ourselves that the 'Wheatear' is a passerine bird, a member of the Oenanthe Family and that 'pound' is another word for 'pen'.

Homework: Complete SUN crosswords 51 & 52

Next meeting: Thursday 16th May at the usual time and place

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Week 35 Thursday 4th April 2019

We had a cosy crowd round the table this morning.

We started with a discussion regarding the group's future in terms of the group's recent increase in members, wide range of abilities and suitable accommodation. The suggestion was put forward that those more accomplished cruciverbalists might like to work together at a separate table – still under the watchful eye of Sue B! It was agreed to discuss this again in a few months time.

Without any more ado, we started working through our homework, Sun crosswords 47 & 48. In the course of our clue solving antics / activities, only one member knew that there is a Hebrew minor prophet called Nahum, who is recorded in the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. The Book of Nahum comes in chronological order between Micah and Habakkuk. He wrote about the end of the Assyrian Empire and its capital city, Nineveh, in a vivid poetic style. Once again, we came upon the word 'En' a unit of measurement.

Regarding our last session: Sun crossword 46, 2 down. The clue answer required the substitution of 'ox' for 'neat'. One member, frustrated by why this should be, undertook her own research. According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1954) 'neat' is listed as 'any animal of the ox kind; cattle; neat-herd; cowherd; cattle shed; neat's leather, ox-hide. So now we know!

Homework:

1. The Daily Telegraph Cryptic Crossword, 10th March 2013 on page 149 of the 'Learn how to do Cryptic Crosswords' by Henry Howarth.
2. Sun crosswords 49 & 50.

Next meeting: The meeting on Thursday 18th April has been cancelled due to most members being otherwise engaged. We will meet again on Thursday 2nd May at 10am in the GL's home.

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Week 34: Thursday 21st March 2019

We were pleased to welcome another new member today. Sue B was back in the fold and suggested that instead of going over our homework, we might like to move on to SUN crosswords 45 & 46. That kept us quiet for quite a while! Indeed, the silence was only broken by sighs of exasperation!

As always, several words and phrases caught our interest:

'In quod' Most of us didn't know that this expression is slang for 'in prison / jail'. Relating to the quadrangle of a jail.

'Pique' as a noun means 'irritation, annoyance, anger, displeasure' and as a verb is used to mean 'to arouse interest' or to 'feel irritated, resentful'

'Glinka'. A knowledge of Russian composers is helpful here! Mikhail Ivanovich Glinka (1804 - 1857) was the first Russian composer to gain wide recognition in his own country.

'Oxlip' primula elation is a member of the Primula family. It is found in woodlands and is similar to primroses and cowslips.

Homework: SUN Crosswords 47 & 48.

Next meeting: Thursday 4th April at the usual time and place

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Week 33: Thursday 7th March 2019

At long last we were able to meet up again; it has seemed like ages since we last pitted our collective wits against a crossword!

Several members and our facilitator Sue B were away today, but we were pleased to welcome a new member to the group.

We started by revisiting 'The Sun Two-Speed Crossword, 7th December 2012 page 144/5 in the Workbook. Between us we were able to complete the crossword and explain how the clues were constructed. We then moved onto to a Daily Express Crusader Crossword, 15th June 2012, page 146/7 in the Workbook.

Several clues especially interested us. For example, some time was

spent discussing whether 'prerogative' was actually miss-pelt in the text but the Oxford Dictionary soon put us right. Most of us thought that the wife of a Sultan was a 'Sultana', however it seems that 'Sultanness' is also an appropriate if infrequently used term. We are now better informed about the meaning of the word 'emanate' - 'to express a quality or feeling through the way that you look or behave'. Synonyms, however also include 'issue' and 'release'.

Next meeting: Thursday 21st March 2019

Homework: Finish off the Daily Express crossword in the Workbook. Try to complete SUN crosswords 43 and 44.

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Week 32: Thursday 28th February 2019

Unfortunately, the meeting on 28th February had to be cancelled and it's now a month since we last met! Time to sharpen the crossword pencil!

We will be meeting again on Thursday 7th March at the usual time and place.

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Week 31: Thursday 7th February 2019

Another busy session and quite a few laughs!

To begin with we looked at our homework, Practice Puzzle 5, page 125 in 'Learn How To Solve Cryptic Crosswords', by Henry Howarth, and between us were able to explain how we 'read' the clues to obtain the answers.

We debated whether to move on to Chapter 5: 'Tackling trickier clues', but after looking at 'Deceptive word meaning: practice clues' page 117, there was general agreement to leave this for another day!

So, we worked together on a 'Daily Mirror' crossword, page 143 and started a Sun puzzle on page 145. Both from 'Learn How To Solve Cryptic Crosswords'.

Homework: to complete the Sun puzzle on page 145

Next meeting: Thursday 28th February at the usual time and place (Please note that we are NOT meeting on Thursday February 21st).

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Week 30: Thursday 17th January 2019

Once again we pitted our collective minds in our attempts to solve the clues that had evaded us whilst working alone at home. We worked through Sun Crosswords 39 & 40 and decided to leave crossword 41 to the next session. Sue lead us through some revision and as a consequence we all agreed we would benefit from a return to basics. We never cease to be surprised at the variety of unknown and or long forgotten words that turn up in our clues.

'Keen' – of course we immediately think of someone who is 'very interested, eager', but as a verb it refers to 'crying and wailing'. If someone 'keens' they 'cry out or make sounds to express their sorrow'. That's a new one for me.

'Gopher' – well, where do we start? It is a 'burrowing rodent with fur pouches found in North and Central America'. It is a 'tortoise of dry and sandy regions native to southern US'. It is an IT term – an application – layer protocol relating to Web documents. However, in our Sun crossword, it was a synonym for 'dog'.

We now know that a 'cable' is more than a wire. It also refers to a measure – 'a cable length is the length of a ships's cable, approximately 600'. Apparently, it is also the name of a comic character, but I can't give you any references!

'Buffet'. It depends how you pronounce it! In our crossword today it meant 'to knock into something' or be 'buffeted about' as in strong winds.

Homework: Revise Chapters 1 to 4 in Henry Howarth's Workbook and complete Practice Puzzle 5 on page 125.

Next meetings: We meet again in our normal pattern on Thursday 7th February. However, as the meeting on 21st February is in the middle of half-term week, we agreed to move the meeting to Thursday 28th February.

Sun crossword grid, Book 3. Please feel free to print off your own copy'.

[Sun Cryptic Crossword PDF](#)

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Week 29: Thursday 3rd January 2019

Our first meeting of the New Year – just what we needed to exercise our 'little grey cells'.

Today we welcomed two new members, and they more than survived being thrown straight into the deep end!

To start, we worked through Sun crosswords 36 & 37 (our homework).

As always, members offered answers and attempted to explain how the clue was solved and Sue B provided further support as needed. As a group, we worked through crossword 38

As expected, some interesting, long-forgotten and new words turned up.

'Vibrato' - we reminded ourselves that 'vibrato' means - vibrate, from the Italian 'vibrare'. It adds expression and effect to music.

'Infra dig' means 'beneath one's dignity' or demeaning. From the Latin 'infra dignitatem'.

'Piton' This is a metal spike used in climbing. The Pitons are two mountainous volcanic plugs in St. Lucia.

The 'Methodist' Church is a denomination of the Protestant Church. However, in today's crossword, 'methodist' referred to a style of acting.

'Ham'. We usually think of pork from a leg that has been preserved. In today's crossword, a 'ham' referred to a 'overacting inferior performer', and the term dates back to about 1882.

'Bushido'. This word was totally unknown to all, except Sue B. The unwritten Samurai Code, known as the Bushido, holds that a true warrior must hold that loyalty, courage, veracity, compassion and honor, as important above all else.

Homework: Complete Sun crosswords 39 & 40, and possibly try 41.

That's quite enough!

Next meeting: Thursday 17th January 2019

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