

3D Crossword May 2020 Newsletter 5

This edition covers the following items:

1. Review of the May 3D Crossword
2. Solvers Comments
3. Report on the online submission process for the May Puzzle

1. Review of the May 3D Crossword

The initial rubric said celebrating a 50th birthday. Clues are in alphabetical order. There were further instructions once the puzzle was completed which we'll come back to. This month's winner was Judy Murray from Exeter. Congratulations Judy.

There were lots of good enjoyable clues and the puzzle solved fairly readily without in any way being too easy. With clue 9 7d (5) Using a lot of dialect is an East Anglian feature, I jumped to DELIA without properly parsing it and had a chuckle when I had to correct to BROAD. A bit of a hiccup fitting SEDATIVE in until I checked the instructions and saw that one cell contained 2 letters

The real fun started once the grid was complete. First, two 7 letter solutions to be replaced by anagrams of themselves. But, before searching for these, the thematic snake demanded to be identified. WINDING ROAD was obvious and then THE LONG AND followed. So The Beatles looked likely. SEA-BELT was easy to find, BELITTLE took a little longer. So we had our 50th anniversary; the BEATLES LET IT BE album.

Now to the coloured squares. These were intriguing. Five thematic items to be identified. Blue was significant in the two blue cells. So we had IVU in blue, plus TEG, USUS, MAE. Plus one other which had to be to do with the highlighted cell numbers 9 & 10. Time to look at the album in detail. Dingbats, we had dingbats. BLUE FOR YOU, GET BACK and TWO OF US great fun. MAGGIE MAE was more straightforward. That left ATL and 9 & 10. What on earth are we after here? It took a while for the penny to drop 910 is ONE AFTER 909.

What a superb puzzle, clearly a potential candidate for puzzle of the year.

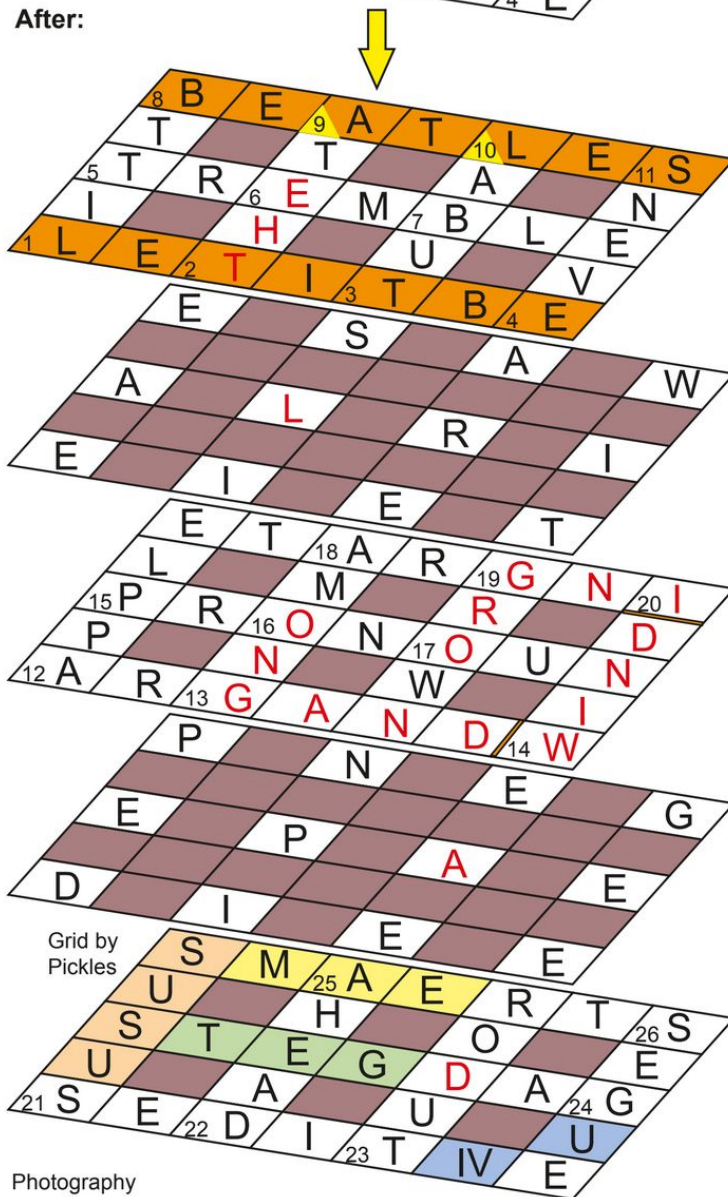
And the picture clue really needed a touch of special insight. Abel attacking Cain in a TV set. SE(ABEL)T.

May 3D Crossword Solution

Grid top layer prior to treatment:



After:



Grid by Pickles

Photography Graham Fox



Pickles

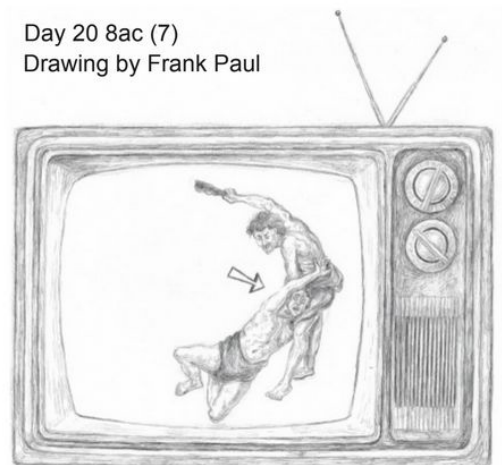
Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the release of the album *Let It Be* by the Beatles.

Featuring tracks from the album:

- ▲ ▲ ONE AFTER 909
- FOR YOU BLUE
- THE TWO OF US
- MAGGIE MAE
- GET BACK

Snake:
THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Day 20 8ac (7)
Drawing by Frank Paul



SEABELT
Abel (being attacked by Cain) on TV:
ABEL inside SET

05 MAY 2020 Up1 Pickles Let It Be CLUED

Preamble/Instructions

Celebrating a 50th anniversary. After completing the grid, two seven-letter entries must be replaced by thematic anagrams of the original answers; all the new words created are real, one is an abbreviation. One cell elsewhere contains two letters. Blue shading represents a thematic item, the other colours represent four other thematic items, although these other colours are not significant. The grid contains one unclued thematic snake to be discovered and written beneath the grid along with the other thematic items.

#	Solution	Direction – Clue – Count	Explanation	Notes
1	AHEAD	25to LSD freak evades cops in van (5)	a(CID)head	
2	AMONG	18to What's in adulterated mango? (5)	*mango	
3	APPLE	12aw Silicon Valley company making cooker? (5)	2 defs	
4	ARGAND	12ac-6 Potentially a grand source of illumination (6)	*(a grand)	
5	ASANA	9d Like an amateur in the lotus position? (5)	as an A	
6	BEADS	1d Loosely based old prayers (5)	*based	Becomes LEADS
7	BETITLE	1ac Left out, belittle horribly and call names (7)	*belittle less l	Becomes <i>LET IT BE</i>
8	BITTS	1aw Posts twice about motorcycle race (5)	TT in bis	Becomes LITTB
9	BROAD	7d Using a lot of dialect is an East Anglian feature (5)	2 defs	
10	DIGIT	22up Figure it could be replaced by a pony on the same side? (5)	ref. <i>Dig It/Dig A Pony</i> , on same side of album	
11	EAGER	10d Agree foolishly, being keen (5)	*agree	Becomes LAGER

12	ELOPE	6d Run away from leaderless people rioting (5)	*(p)eople	
13	ETWEE	4d Case of re-tweet making sides split (5)	(r)etwee(t)	
14	EVENT	4aw Incident's exact time (5)	even t	Becomes EVENS
15	GADGETS	24ba Ted's gag about doodahs (7)	*(Ted's gag)	
16	GENIE	24up Spirit that is associated with the low-down (5)	gen i.e.	
17	GROWN	19to Raised line of e.g. turnips in vacant garden (5)	row in g(arde)n	
18	INGRATE	20ba Thankless sailor cycles to base (7)	rating cycled, e	
19	PRONOUN	15ac Yoko meets peace organisation getting behind publicity element of <i>I Me Mine</i> (7)	Ono, UN after PR, def=any "element" of I/me/mine	
20	SEA BELT	8ac Wrack as safety equipment fails first time (7)	sea(t) belt	Becomes BEATLES
21	SEDATIVE	21ac Deviates wildly, needing drug to calm down (8)	*deviates	
22	SEEPS	8d Bleeds last of radiators while spare pump runs (5)	last letters of radiators etc	Becomes BEEPS
23	SEGUE	26to Some amuse-gueules to follow immediately (5)	hidden	
24	STREAMS	26ba Groups of students getting masters confused (7)	*masters	
25	SUSUS	21aw West Africans united in awareness (5)	U in suss	
26	TAPES	5d Narrowband recordings? (5)	"narrow band" pl	
27	TENET	3d A principle which can be upheld or dropped? (5)	ref. to palindrome in down clue	
28	THETA	2aw My facetious thank you letter (5)	the, ta	

29	TREMBLE	5ac Mobile goes into high-pitched vibration (7)	m in treble	
30	TUBAE	3aw Antique trumpets in opening parts of <i>Across The Universe</i> being electronically remixed (5)	*atube (first letters)	Becomes TUBAL
31	TUDOR	23aw Time with terribly dour royal family (5)	t, *dour	
32	TWIGS	11d Suddenly grasps the divining rods (5)	2 defs	Becomes SWIGS
33	WIND	14aw-4 It blows mind, turning head upside down! (4)	mind, m upside down=w	

Thematic clue	Letter/word count	Thematic answer	Explanation
Blue shading	(10 letters, 3 words)	FOR YOU BLUE	Sounds like FOR YOU; in BLUE
Green shading	(7 letters, 2 words)	GET BACK	TEG=GET BACK
Yellow shading	(9 letters, 2 words)	MAGGIE MAE	Simple allusion
Bright Yellow	(11 characters, 3 words)	ONE AFTER 909	910 follows 909
Pink shading	(7 letters, 3 words)	TWO OF US	USUS=US twice
Hidden snake	(21 letters, 5 words)	THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD	Hidden answer is appropriately LONG & WINDING

2. Solvers Comments May 3D Crossword

I felt the instructions were a bit unclear. Jumps from focus on the two seven letter entries to referring to all without explanation. Completing this form was helpful to understanding what was needed. Two or three obscure words, but all gettable from the wordplay JP

A tour de force of grid construction: The Long and Winding Road and Get Back are brilliant and it's very clever to have managed the anagrams of Beatles and Let It Be, while creating real words! N&SI

Loved it! Very tricky and really make me think. RE

Very very clever. IL

Amusing and challenging ML

difficulty ladder for me and it's so satisfying to sort out the meaning of the instructions when at first reading they seem impossibly complicated. I am so grateful! Loved how tracks that weren't answers were incorporated into the clues RR

Nice variation on the more usual method of incorporating thematic material. Excellent puzzle. AH

Loved the theme, and the thematic elements fitted really neatly - lots of them, too! RS

Enjoyable theme with some nice clues. Many thanks, Pickles. PC

This was the most amazing puzzle and I really enjoyed it. I was lucky in spotting the word winding in the grid and from there it was pretty much plain sailing. MP

An excellent puzzle whose theme was brilliantly executed. I liked the way all the thematic elements were incorporated cryptically in different ways, of which the anagrams in the top layer and the winding road going through all layers were my favourites. It took me a little while first to find the anagrams and then to make sense of the 'words' in the colour-shaded cells. A good set of clues too. AB

A worthy commemoration. Last snake well hidden. Where is MAGGIE? Only 28 somewhat puzzling. Pictorial clues incomprehensible as usual. MJ

We really enjoyed this puzzle. How on earth do you set about the creation of it?

An amazing number of linked solutions fitting into what at first glance was a 'simple' grid! The twist with the letter changes was a good addition too. HK&CC

I really like all the easter eggs - though it took me a while to work them out, they're all perfectly fair. All good clues too HS

As an original Beatles fan (who spent 3 nights sleeping outside the Bournemouth Pavilion to get tickets) I solved this fairly quickly after I puzzled over "belittle" and "betitle" and found LET IT BE. A quick check confirmed the 50 year anniversary and then all fell into place. A superb effort to get so many track titles into one puzzle!! ST

The theme was brilliantly hidden. it took ages for the coin to drop. congratulations to Mr or Ms pickles GS

Solving the clues was fine - but the instructions were very difficult to understand RC

After getting the theme one clue from the end it suddenly all makes sense - wish we had spotted it earlier. J&JH

Great puzzle - really enjoyed the whole thing, daily clues and the cleverly tied-in additional thematic items. I get a real buzz from solving clues that I have struggled with, especially the picture clues. This was yet another step up on the teful to everyone involved for devising and supporting such a wonderful set of puzzles. BS

This was a case of 'Help! 'then 'We can work it out' after 'With a little help from my friends '. In other words, a real puzzler . Hope I don't end up being 'The fool on the hill'. Great stuff! SW

A very good after-solving challenge. The clues were I would say easier than usual, but finding the album took a bit of time. Fortunately "and winding" was visible throughout, so it was always going to be something to do with that song. Getting APPLE and the PRONOUNS clue in as well, and the DIGIT one (though according to Wikipedia Dig a pony - whatever that means - is on the other side) makes this, in my opinion, a really clever bit of grid-filling, while the 9/10 bit must have gone in first, I suppose. Because of its length and sinuosity I am tempted to ask is THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD a record? Well done and thanks to Sirius, Nora, Alan - and Jos! AC

Brilliant, very difficult M,J&DB

Beautiful and complicated, I nearly failed on the number-based thematic clue but spotted it in the end. EF

What kind of warped mind creates thisexcellent MM

Difficult! It took me a long time to find the theme, and then a good deal of brain-tangle to follow all the instructions! I'm not at all convinced of my answers, but this is probably the best I can do! DS

Cute theme. AB

It reached the limit of my ability BB

What an inventive puzzle, had us guessing for weeks. Day clue 10 was impenetrable until the theme emerged but was then revealed as a very clever piece of work. Congratulations to all concerned. JM

Great puzzle, once I'd figured out what was going on. Enjoyed the witty Easter eggs! DH

This took a long time to spot the theme - very well hidden! But I don't see the connection with the sheep in the background picture? I also remain mystified by the two separate highlighted yellow cells with just the letters A and E(or L if the anagram version?). ETWEE is a pathetic apology for a word - simply a horrible misspelling of ETUI. I hope you don't have to resort too often to these depths to find a word!!! SB (The highlighted 9 {number of the square with the A} & highlighted 10 {number of the square with E} make 910 which is 'One after 909', one of the album title easter eggs Editor)

A great theme. Loved the long snake. The highlighted Easter eggs took a little cracking. Not confident of reasoning for day 1. JN

Really impressed with the Easter eggs. Once we got the theme the final few clues fell into place. HJ

An enjoyable puzzle with a great theme CH

1. Report on the online submission process for the May Puzzle

I was astonished at the number of you who used the online submission system and also gave us feedback. Well over 90% of entries were submitted online and the overwhelming feedback was positive. Nearly all of you preferred the online system and most, but not all, of you felt that it was quicker and involved less effort

Because the May puzzle included a number of changed grid entries some of you were frustrated by having to re-enter some of your answers. Some of you felt that because of the warning that you have made a mistake online submitters had an advantage over traditional submitters.

In response to specific requests Jos redesigned the online system to include the following features:

Your name: The name field is now separated into first and last names so that the guesswork is taken out of extracting the first name(s) used in the email response.

Letter count alerts: You will get instant feedback if you have not entered the correct number of letters. This will prevent those frustratingly hard to spot typos where you've accidentally missed or added a letter.

Saving work in progress: If you are interrupted while entering your answers, you can save your partially filled form by submitting it. Previously, all fields required content so it wasn't possible to submit blank answers. The email

response will warn you that your entry is incomplete and include a link for you to finish the job later.

Email response message: The email response includes a "well done" message for fully correct entries. It will warn you if you have missed any required solutions and will only alert you to an incorrect entry (but again without telling you which or how many answers are wrong) when all required solutions have been submitted.

From our perspective it has proved extremely efficient. We have an easily accessible record of correct entries which makes the job of identifying those eligible for the 3D World Championships (with 12 all correct entries over the year) a straightforward process. It also makes extracting and reproducing your monthly puzzle comments significantly easier.

As a result of the remarkable success of the online submission process we have decided to move immediately to an online submission option for the June puzzle and for the remainder of 2020. We shall of course continue to accept traditional entries sent to sirius@calendarpuzzles.co.uk

Alan Goddard