

Sudoku Mild No 14,865

		4		5		2		
			6	2	1			
	5						4	
		8	3	1	5	9		
3			4		7			2
5	3		8		6		7	9
	8						2	
	7	6				5	3	

Difficult No 14,866

Fiendish No 14,867

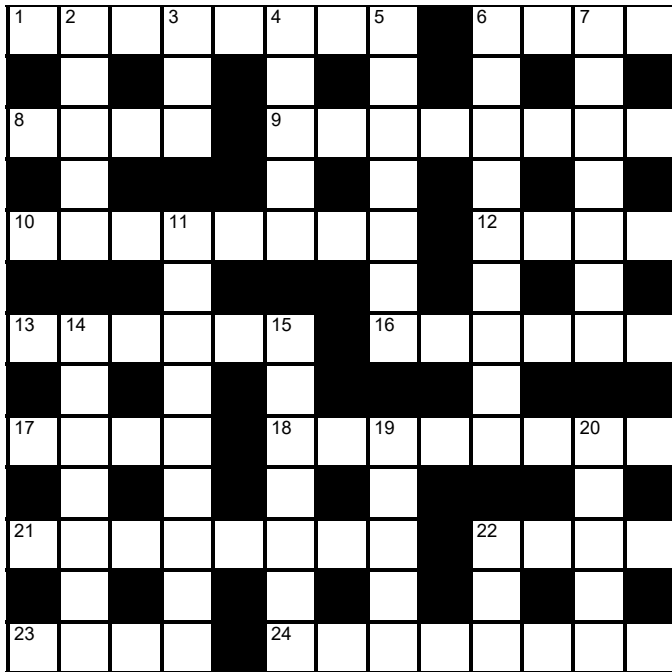
		2			1			
			6			3	9	2
4					9	7		
	9						2	
				3		1	4	
2		7				8		
	8	4		7	6			5
	2		8	5			1	
	6					4		

5			9		2			8
	1		5		7		9	
			2		5			
		6					9	
	5	7	1		6	4	2	
4								2
	6		7		8		3	
		1		5		8		

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Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

The Times Quick Cryptic No 2660 by Teazel



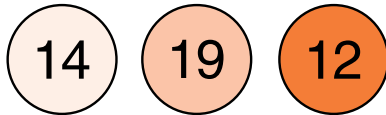
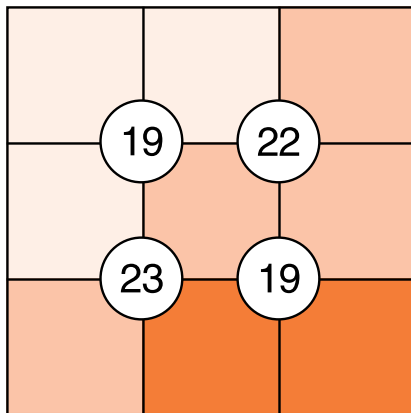
Across

- 1 Duke in court to secure expanse of trees (8)
- 6 The first in bikini, seek permission to sunbathe (4)
- 8 One's stuck in quagmire, the story of my life (4)
- 9 Benevolent feeling competent solicitor should produce? (8)
- 10 Trio belt out opera text (8)
- 12 Put out English with German (4)
- 13 Prevent Richard speaking like a poet of old (6)
- 16 Ferocious types start to gather in rows (6)
- 17 One not to be trusted putting bar back (4)
- 18 Ineffectual person made to reform, coming into fortune (4,4)
- 21 Fuming more than anyone, tasing wildly (8)
- 22 Flee berth? Nonsense (4)
- 23 Lose temper in childish game (4)
- 24 Volume is difficult to support (8)

Down

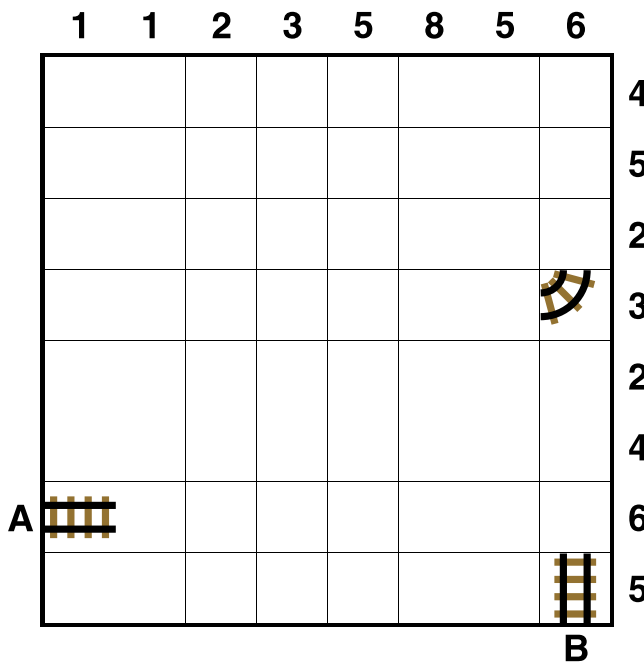
- 2 Old bone on one antelope (5)
- 3 Pet one worshipped rolling over (3)
- 4 Jargon a king understood (5)
- 5 Restart of rugby game for ex-student? (4-3)
- 6 Asked piteously about bird with deformed limbs (3-6)
- 7 Member of platoon flogged? That is right (7)
- 11 Where on reflection you may be speedily caught (5,4)
- 14 Go in van, moving to French city (7)
- 15 A lieutenant admitted to two churches and a US college (7)
- 19 Engine's time in dock (5)
- 20 Misanthrope showing a little mercy? Nice! (5)
- 22 Front cover that can go either way up (3)

Suko No 4100



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Train Tracks No 2229



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Word watch David Parfitt

Ebriety

- a Drunkenness
- b Miserliness
- c A state of boiling or bubbling

Chuck-will's-widow

- a A US bird of the nightjar family
- b A form of printing error
- c A small black venomous spider

Metonymy

- a An underground formation of volcanic rock
- b The rhetorical use of exaggeration
- c The paranormal acquisition of information

Backgammon Chris Bray

Nordic Open: part two

We stay in Copenhagen for another week to look at a position from which I certainly learnt a useful lesson.

Hans Liby of Norway (Black) trailed Alfredo Unes of Brazil (White) 4-12 to 17 in the final. Losing by a substantial margin, Hans had doubled early and he now had a 52 to play. I watched the final live and when this position occurred my immediate reaction was that Hans should play 24/22, 13/8.

When we are taught the basic theory of prime-versus-prime positions, we soon learn that we should come to the edge of our opponent's prime so that we can leap the prime once it begins to break down. That certainly seems to apply here as, unless White rolls an immediate three, his prime is likely to crack very soon.

Justin Nowell, a very strong US player currently residing in London, was on commentary duty and he did an excellent job throughout the tournament. His first thought, based on many years' experience of such positions, was that Black should play 13/8, 6/4,

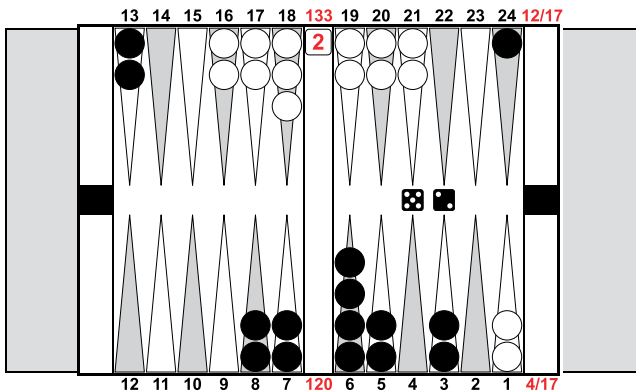
slotting the key 4-pt. I still wasn't sure so earmarked the position for later in-depth analysis.

An XG rollout quickly proved that Justin's play was correct and I was wrong. Hans also made the wrong play over the board but still went on to win the game. Now let's try to understand why 13/8, 6/4 is the best play.

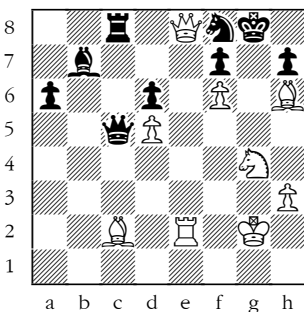
Firstly, and very importantly, this is not quite a pure prime-versus-prime problem. While Black's 4-pt remains open, White has a potential escape route for his rear checkers. The quicker that gap can be plugged, the better. Therefore slotting it is entirely logical.

The second point to note is that White's prime may well dismantle itself. Black would prefer not to be on the bar as White's prime advances because he wants to make the crucial 4-pt to complete his own prime, and therefore Hans should keep his rear checker out of harm's way on White's ace-point.

The key to the position is Black's 4-pt, and making that has priority over any other consideration. So, for once, advancing to the edge of the opponent's prime is incorrect. Lesson learnt!

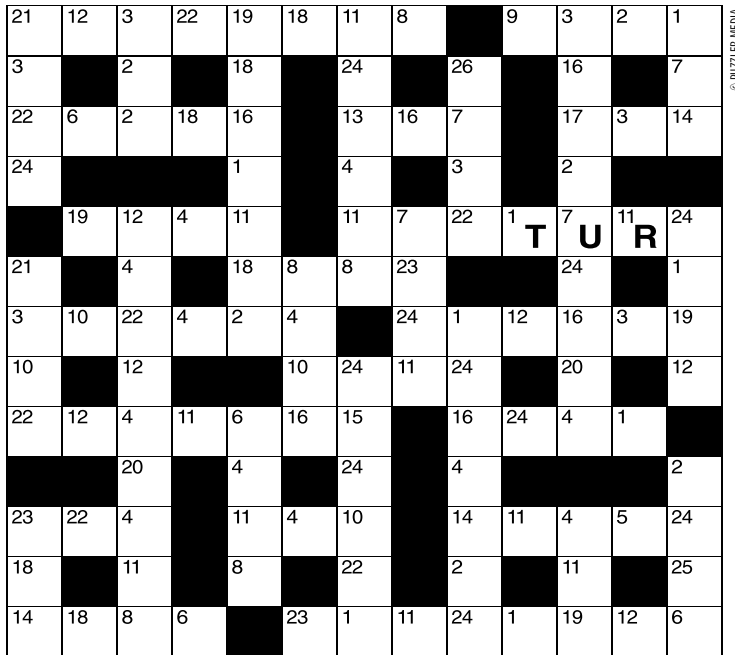


Winning Move



White to play. This position is a variation from Celik-Amundsen, Fagernes 2024. White has a tremendous attack and an extra piece. However, finishing off is not simple as the white queen is threatened and Black counterplay with ... Bxd5+ or ... Qxd5+ is on the cards. The natural 1 Bxh7+ will, in fact, win but the variations after 1 ... Kh8 are not easy. Can you spot the alternative brisk and brilliant finish?

Codeword No 5199



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

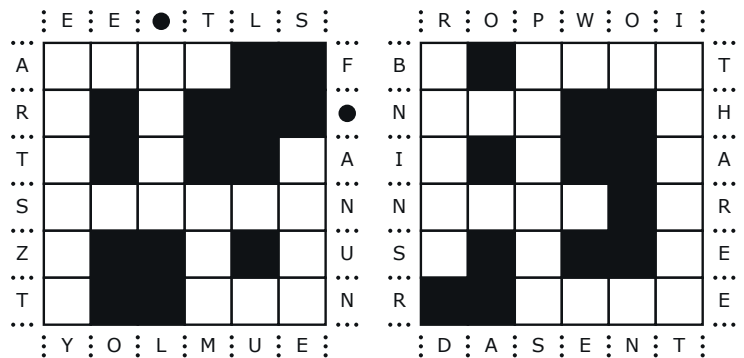
1	T	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	8	9	10	11	R	12	13
14		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

Cluelines Stuck on Codeword? To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

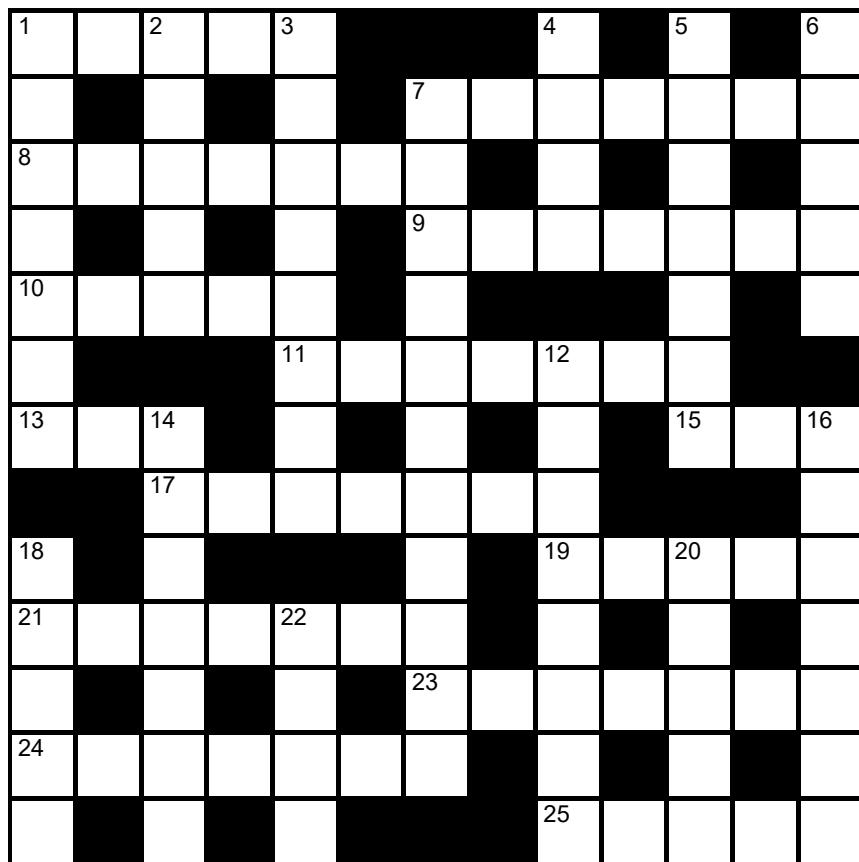
Lexica Easy No 7373

Hard No 7374



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

times2 Crossword No 9515



Across

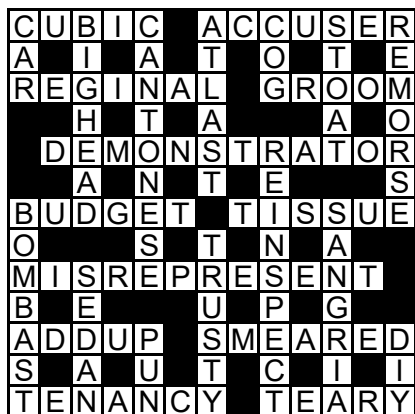
- 1 False, spurious (5)
- 7 Great victory (7)
- 8 Kitchen utensil (7)
- 9 Upbeat, cheerful (7)
- 10 Retrieve (5)
- 11 Low protective wall (7)
- 13 Sever (branches, eg) (3)
- 15 Cry convulsively (3)
- 17 Seats for riding elephants (7)

- 19 Edge along furtively (5)
- 21 Relatively small quantity (7)
- 23 Self-centredness (7)
- 24 --- *People*, Le Carré novel; emojis with happy faces (7)
- 25 Fortune-telling card (5)

Down

- 1 Shy, timid (7)
- 2 Formally allow or bestow (5)
- 3 Unorthodox boxing stance (8)
- 4 Store for livestock fodder (4)
- 5 Diacritical marks used in German (7)
- 6 Snapshot (5)
- 7 Receptacles for sacred bread and wine in Catholicism (11)
- 12 Travel document (8)
- 14 Interactive radio show (5-2)
- 16 Pub coaster (7)
- 18 Capital city of Tibet (5)
- 20 Less damp (5)
- 22 Ran away, left hastily (4)

Solution to Crossword 9514



Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

KenKen Difficult No 6191

90×			14+		11+
3-		5+			
6+	1-			6	6×
		9+			
	120×			15+	
3÷					

All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 4739

4				>	
		^			
		<			
		^			
	<				
	>			3	<

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 3698

7	6	10	16	35	4	29
4		23			6	22
22		17			9	
11			4	38	16	
	22	29			17	
27					7	
23			33		14	
3		35				10 11
4		16		8	3	6
9			24			
	6		6			14

Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

Quintagram®

Solve all five cryptic clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Impulse to go off the deep end perhaps about right (5)

— — — — —

2 Dull High School subject (5)

— — — — —

3 Might light distress signal (6)

— — — — —

4 Clubs with members were on the increase (7)

— — — — —

5 American rogue whose parent was a stunner? (3,2,1,3)

—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
A	A	A	A	B	C	D	D
D	E	E	F	G	H	I	I
L	M	M	M	N	N	O	O
R	S	S	T	U	V	Y	Y

Brain Trainer

EASY	8	x 7	DOUBLE IT	÷ 4	+ 66	TRIPLE IT	HALVE IT	- 37	+ 1/4 OF IT	HALVE IT	ANSWER	
MEDIUM	45	+ 56	TRIPLE IT	- 117	÷ 6	DOUBLE IT	DOUBLE IT	+ 1/4 OF IT	÷ 5	+ 93	ANSWER	
HARDER	789	- 427	DOUBLE IT	÷ 4	+ 63	HALVE IT	x 6	DOUBLE IT	÷ 4	- 123	ANSWER	

Polygon



From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives. **How you rate** 12 words, average; 17, good; 23, very good; 29, excellent

Yesterday's answers

clue, clump, cruel, crump, crumple, crus, cruse, culm, cupel, cure, curl, curse, cusp, ecru, luce, lucre, muscle, puce, scrum, scrump, **scruple**, scruple, sculp, scum, scup, spec, spruce, sucre, ulcer

Cell Blocks No 5082

		4	2	
		4		
3		3		3
	3		3	
	4			4
	4		12	

Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Set Square No 3701

	+		-		= 1
x		x		x	
	x		+		= 16
-		-		x	
	-	7	+	2	= 3
=		=		=	
12		11		18	

Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Killer Moderate No 9436

30		12	13		12			
				20		16		27
6	10				9			
		19		11		30		
22								10
		22	10	16				
11					12		17	
3			13		14		12	11
10			7					

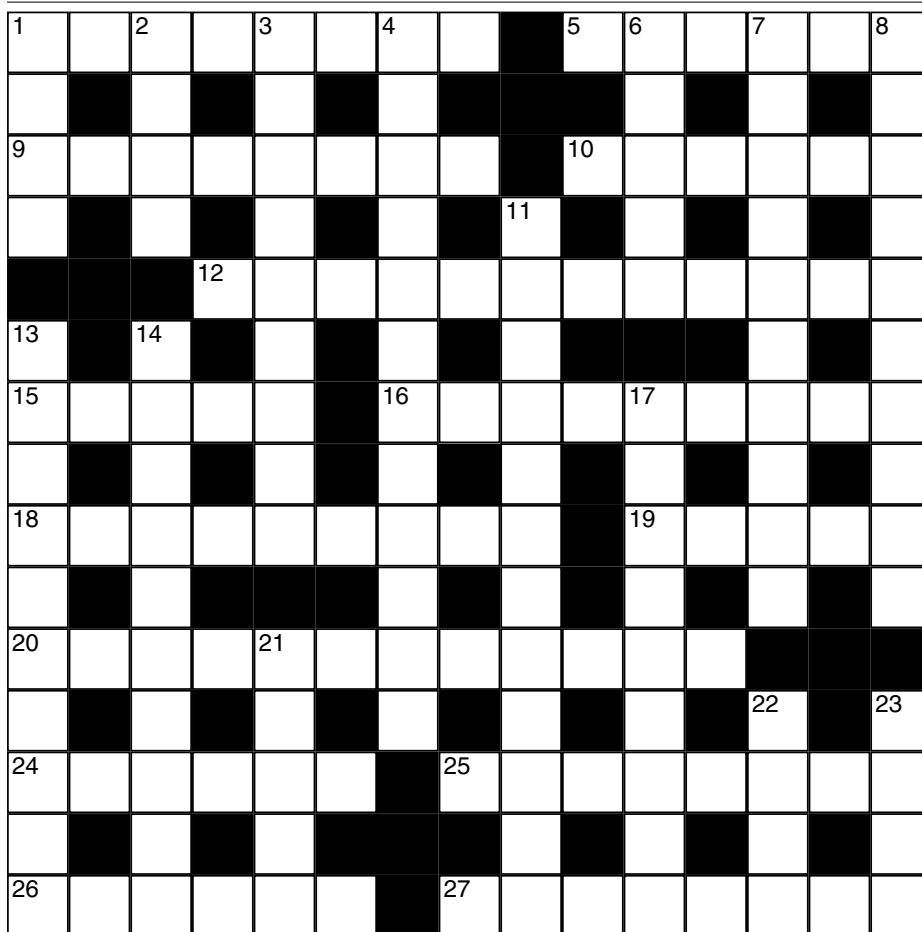
Killer Deadly No 9437

27		4	18		15	9		
							23	
17	12		7	9	16	23		
	7							23
		22			12			
20		12	14	15			10	
11		20			18			5
19				17				

As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

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Times Crossword 28,901



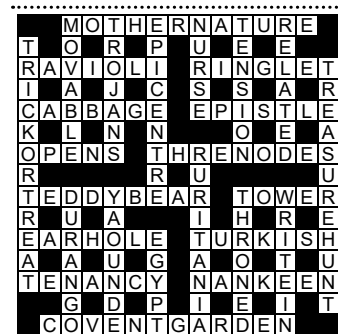
ACROSS

- 1 Author in online catalogue after end of autumn (8)
- 5 Go quickly out of control, indication of indecision after caution (6)
- 9 Saintry female in charge in place of a couple of gentlemen (8)
- 10 Predator that apparently prays in mass with enemies (6)
- 12 One of seven letters from country admitting old novelist and, separately, me (5,7)
- 15 About half of score in many cases (5)
- 16 Far from lively prisoner sheltering a new one (9)
- 18 Naturally nobody speaks this strangely neat prose (9)
- 19 At home wearing headgear, having turned back flap (5)
- 20 Illustration in book is central to revised perfection (12)
- 24 Hot ingredient for sauce, despite what you hear (6)
- 25 Small missile making shrill noise (8)
- 26 Having a meal, sound as a bell, content to be doubled up? (6)
- 27 Kind of bottle sailors found in end (5-3)

DOWN

- 1 Stated opposition about very small service (4)
- 2 As such, there's no difference between best and worst (4)
- 3 Learner with an unhappy experience, one who's invested in his fields (9)
- 4 What causes communal tension? It's Americans out of order (12)
- 6 Alternative to reveille in Territorial Army (5)
- 7 Plays some music, say — record isn't a remix (10)
- 8 Toughness on island in sound? Just the opposite (10)
- 11 Hostile frenzied action gains time (12)
- 13 Impassive fire controller, female, provided great service (5-5)
- 14 Block proposal for cinematographic technique (4-6)
- 17 One Parliamentarian with kind of voice that's influential (9)
- 21 Gripping part of hobby (5)
- 22 Parts of body more than twice as long as hands (4)
- 23 Parrots, for example, sent up for bit of flight (4)

Yesterday's solution 28,900



Check today's answers by ringing 0905 757 0141 by midnight. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390.

Solutions

Quick Cryptic 2659

C	A	C	S	C	S
A	N	N	O	Y	S
R	T	S	R	N	E
I	N	E	R	T	I
C	L	I	R	O	I
A	V	O	I	D	A
T	P	E	T	H	E
U	S	E	C	O	M
R	O	I	S	O	
I	N	F	E	R	S
S	L	A	E	R	I
T	O	A	S	T	E
X	E	Y	H	N	E

Codeword 5198

D	I	V	I	N	E	G	E	E	Z	E	R
U	I	O				P	O				E
P	R	O				U	N	A	N	I	M
L	L	N	N	D							U
E	X	I	T			F	A	R	E	W	E
X	I	N	E			L	M				L
P	S					I	N	C	O	G	N
O	U	T	H	O	U	S	E				Q
G						G	I	S			E
R	I	V	E	R	B	A	N	K			N
O	I	A				I	C				E
M	I	A	S	M	A	I	N	J	E	C	T

Kakuro 3697

9	6	8		3	1	8	9	7
7	8	9	1		1	2	6	8
9	7	3	8				6	8
9	1	3		7	9		6	7
7	2	1	3		8	9	5	
		2	1	3		8	7	3
5	3	4		2	1		9	6
2	4				2	7	3	1
3	1	9	8	7		9	4	2
1	2	8	6	9			8	4

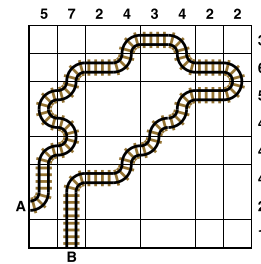
Sudoku 14,862

7	5	9	3	8	6	2	4	1
6	1	3	2	5	4	9	7	8
2	8	4	1	9	7	5	6	3
9	4	6	5	2	8	3	1	7
3	2	8	7	4	1	6	9	5
5	7	1	6	3	9	4	8	2
1	6	2	9	7	5	8	3	4
8	9	5	4	1	3	7	2	6
4	3	7	8	6	2	1	5	9

Tetonor 460

28	32	17	18
2 x 14	2 x 16	14 + 3	2 + 16
12	13	23	21
9 + 3	4 + 9	22 + 1	3 x 7
22	30	10	16
1 x 22	6 x 5	7 + 3	2 + 14
11	27	42	36
6 + 5	3 x 9	14 x 3	4 x 9

Train Tracks 2228



Sudoku 14,863

6	2	9	4	1	5	7	3	8
1	4	5	8	3	7	2	6	9
8	7	3	6	9	2	1	5	4
3	6	7	5	4	9	8	2	1
9	8	2	1	7	3	5	4	6
4	5	1	2	8	6	9	7	3
2	1	4	7	6	8	3	9	5
7	9	6	3	5	1	4	8	2
5	3	8	9	2	4	6	1	7

Cell Blocks 5081

2	3		3
		3	
		3	3
4			10
4			
	7		
2	5		

Set Square 3700

9	x	3	+	2
÷		x		x
1	x	4	x	5
+		-		+
7	+	6	x	8

Lexica 7371

K	I	N	D	L	Y
	N			A	
A	T	E		W	
	E		O		
A	N	G	R	Y	
T			E		

Sudoku 14,864

6	4	1	3	2	7	9	8	5
2	7	5	8	4	9	6	1	3
8	9	3	5	6	1	4	7	2
4	6	9	1	5	8	3	2	7
5	3	2	7	9	4	1	6	8
1	8	7	2	3	6	5	9	4
9	2	6	4	7	5	8	3	1
3	1	4	9	8	2	7	5	6
7	5	8	6	1	3	2	4	9

Futoshiki 4738

3	1	4	5	2
1	3	<	5	2
			^	4
4	5	2	3	1
	∇	4		
2	∇	4	3	1
	∇	5		
5	2	>	1	4
			∇	3

KenKen 6190

1	5	2	3	6	4
6	1	4	5	2	3
3	4	5	2	1	6
4	6	3	1	5	2
2	3	1	6	4	5
5	2	6	4	3	1

Lexica 7372

R	E	L	I	E	F
	A			O	
S	T	R	A	N	D
	I		R		
	N		I		
G	R	A	T	E	

Today's solutions

Killer 9434

1	9	8	2	4	5	7	3	6
7	2	3	9	6	1	5	4	8
5	4	6	3	8	7	1	9	2
9	3	1	6	5	4	8	2	7
6	8	4	7	2	9	3	5	1
2	5	7	8	1	3	9	6	4
8	6	5	1	3	2	4	7	9
4	7	2	5	9	8	6	1	3
3	1	9	4	7	6	2	8	5

Killer 9435

4	3	9	6	1	7	8	5	2
6	2	8	4	3	5	7	9	1
5	1	7	2	9	8	6	3	4
3	5	2	9	7	6	1	4	8
9	7	1	8	2	4	5	6	3
8	6	4	3	5	1	2	7	9
1	9	6	5	4	2	3	8	7
7	4	5	1	8	3	9	2	6
2	8	3	7	6	9	4	1	5

Cryptic Quintagram

- 1 Drive
- 2 Maths
- 3 Mayday
- 4 Climbed
- 5 Son of a gun

Suko 4100

1	6	9
7	5	2
3	8	4

Brain Trainer

- Easy 65
- Medium 124
- Harder 243

Word watch

- Ebriety** (a) Drunkenness (Collins)
- Chuck-will's-widow** (a) A US bird of the nightjar family (Chambers)
- Metagnomy** (c) The paranormal acquisition of information (OED)
- Chess – Winning Move**

- 1 Qxf7+! Kxf7 2 Re7+ Kg8 3 Rg7+ Kh8 and now White finishes off with the beautiful
- 4 Rxf7+! Nxf7 5 Bg7+ Kg8 6 Nh6 mate