

Sudoku Mild No 14,847

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

Difficult No 14,848 **Fiendish No 14,849**

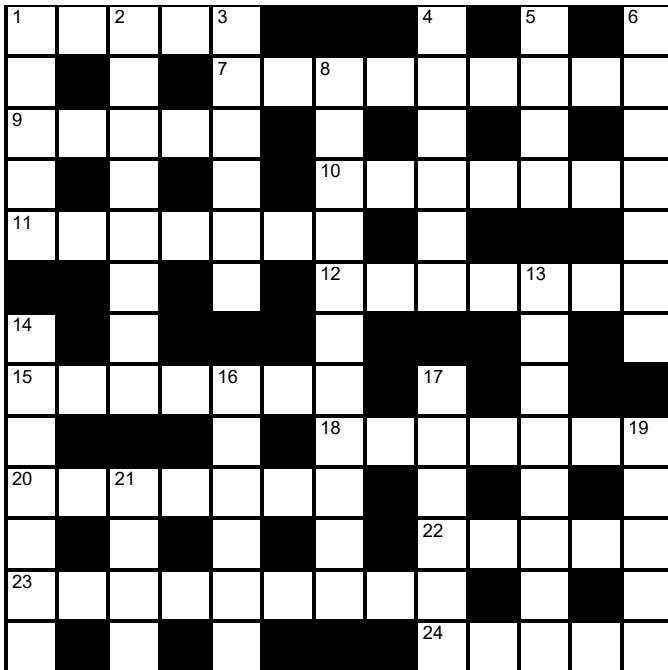
7								8
			3	1	4			
		3	9		7	1		
	9						6	
8	6	1				3	4	7
9				3				2
			8		9			
		5	7		2	4		

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

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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 2654 by Hurley



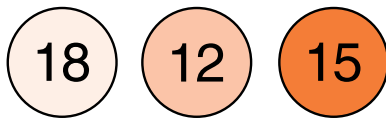
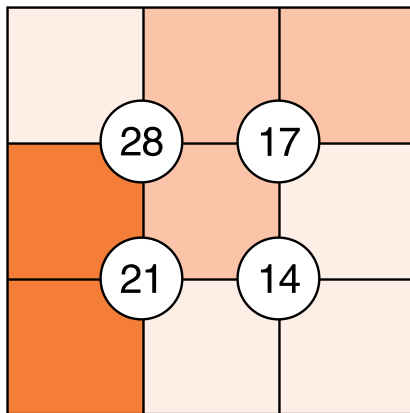
Across

- 1 Debut? That's a shock! (5)
- 7 Resistance of presenter in London is tempting you initially (9)
- 9 Higher in rank, could become purple if learner included? (5)
- 10 This might advertise a little greenery (7)
- 11 Know in advance enemy must seize king by bishop's place (7)
- 12 Attractively thin person posting letter with pounds inside (7)
- 15 Somehow reunite followers (7)
- 18 Habitual way to protect home (7)
- 20 Maybe not wholly proper Hapsburg (7)
- 22 Very little in short street that's charming (5)
- 23 Demanding situation — in change, Lille regularly visited (9)
- 24 Found in habitat, typically shabby (5)

Down

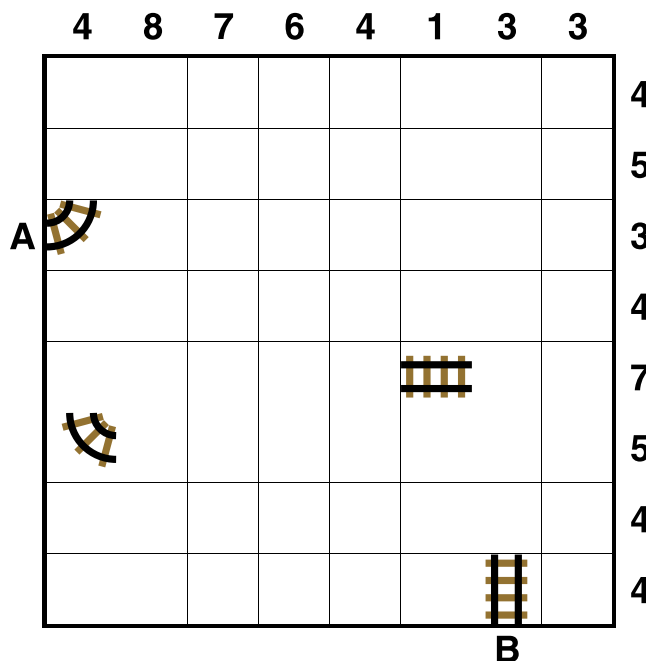
- 1 Things in general, formal and old-fashioned? Not quite (5)
- 2 A quiet mother maybe easily understood (8)
- 3 Party beat (6)
- 4 Silver in mud? An illusion (6)
- 5 Clock face used by lad climbing around India (4)
- 6 My story with Oxford's head ousted by Eton's head — crime novel? (7)
- 8 Lessons a rep arranged for colleague in shop? (11)
- 13 Coming up, top island chap, hard-working (8)
- 14 Hot areas include first appearance of rain in items for discussion (7)
- 16 In orderly way have meal, large, in New York (6)
- 17 Tabloid group's daily event (6)
- 19 Soldier on watch with cap missing competitor (5)
- 21 Wander through Italian city reportedly (4)

Suko No 4094



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 2223



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

Laniary

- a Worn around the neck
- b Pertaining to wool
- c Adapted for tearing

Anoesis

- a Emotion felt without understanding
- b Ritual blessing with oil
- c A complete opposite

Vinegaroon

- a A sharp-tasting salad dressing
- b A North American arachnid
- c A peevish or cantankerous person

Backgammon Chris Bray

Nordic Open

The Nordic Open is a longstanding fixture in the backgammon calendar. It is held over the Easter weekend and always attracts a strong field. This year's event was in Copenhagen. For once the British contingent had no success, and the final was contested by Hans Liby of Norway and Alfredo Unes of Brazil.

Hans is well-known as a strong player while Alfredo is relatively unknown in Europe. The main difference between the two players was in cube handling, with Hans making but a single blunder in the whole match. Despite that, Alfredo raced into a 12-3 lead in the 17-point match, and things looked grim for Hans. Sensibly he didn't panic, and he slowly reduced Alfredo's lead.

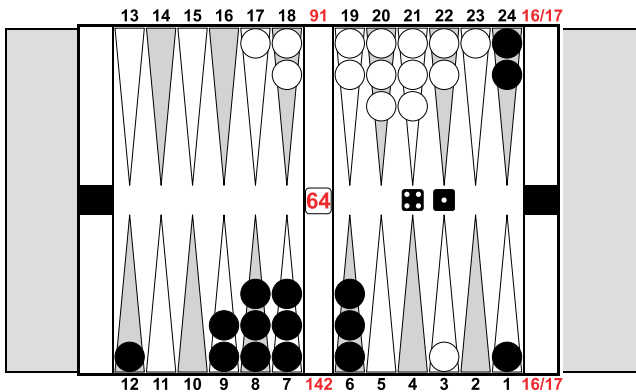
After nearly three hours of play, Hans finally tied the match at 16-16 and so the next game became double match point (DMP). As we have seen in this column before, DMP requires careful handling. The cube is dead and gammons do not count. Back games should not be feared. It is vital to keep all

of one's checkers in play, if at all possible.

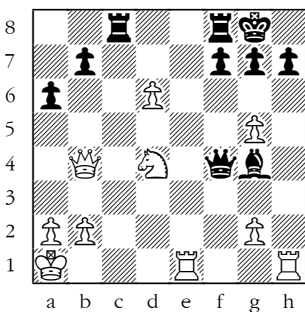
Hans (White) got off to a good start in the DMP game and soon built a strong position. As we join it Alfredo (Black) has a 41 to play. He had already erred by dumping a checker on his ace-point when he didn't need to. He now elected to try to win by going forwards and played 24/23*, 12/8. This was asking too much of his checkers, and the surrender of his anchor proved decisive. It gave Hans an easy ride, and he duly won the game and the match, 17-16.

How should Alfredo have played this 41? He should have assessed the position as a prime-versus-prime problem and attempted to build a prime in front of White's last rear checker. 9/5, 6/5 allows White to escape with sixes, so that cannot be correct. There are three sensible plays: 12/8, 6/5; 12/11, 8/4; and my favourite, 8/4, 6/5.

If the slotted checkers are hit, Black will have a well-timed ace-point game. If they are not hit, Black can quickly build a counter prime. As with many before him, Alfredo failed his DMP test.

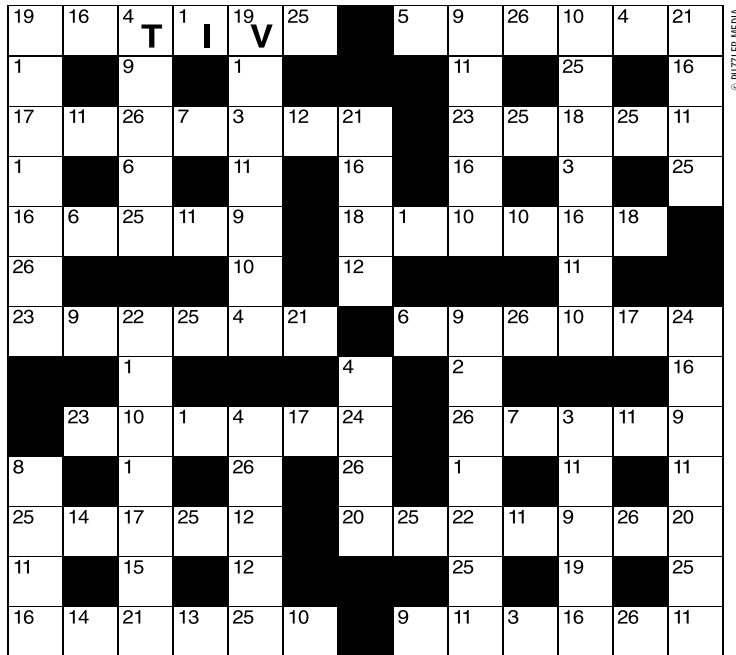


Winning Move



White to play. This position is from Xiong-Jain, Titled Tuesday, chess.com 2024. This position is an example of why it is essential to study mating combinations. Certain concepts repeat and being aware of the basic structures makes calculation much easier. The clue in this position is a theme known as "Anastasia's mate". Familiarity with this configuration will enable the winning idea to be found. Can you see it?

Codeword No 5193



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

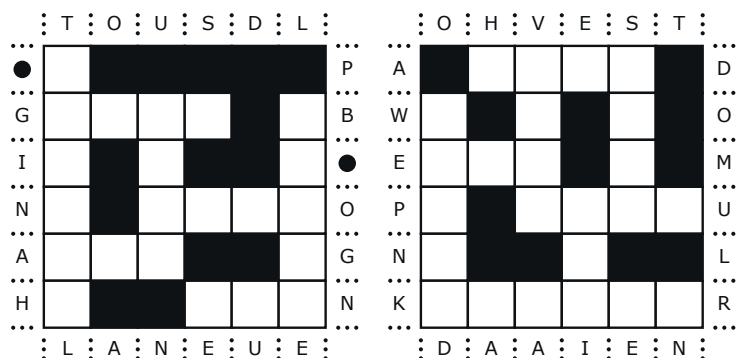
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

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).

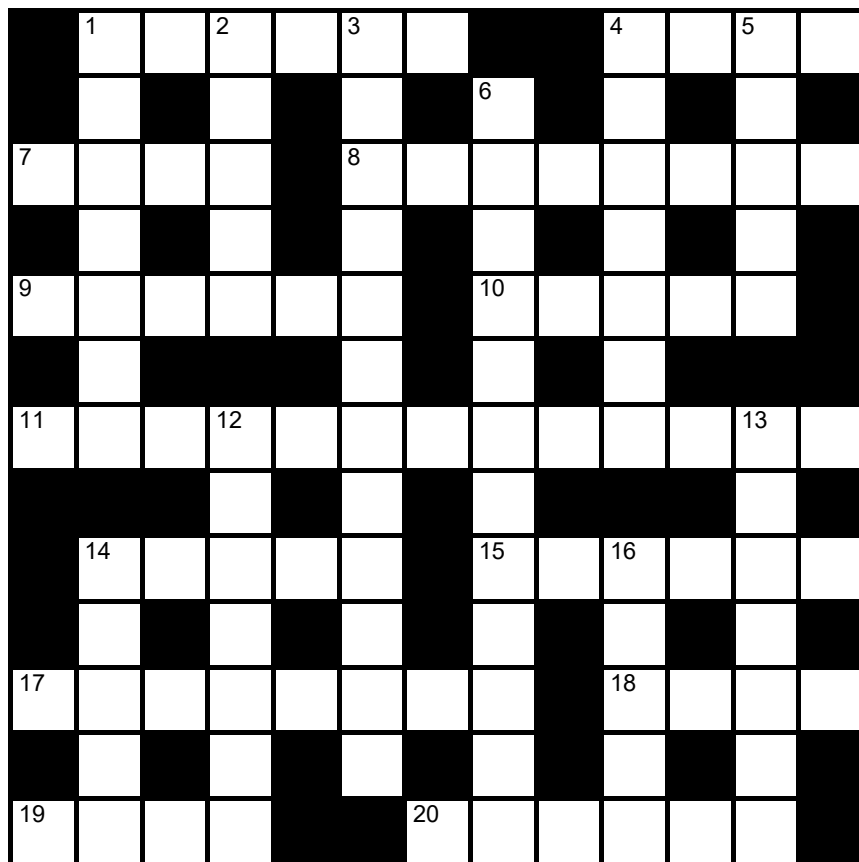
Lexica Easy No 7359

Hard No 7360



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 9509



Across

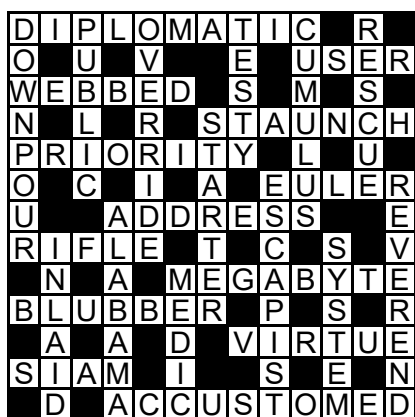
- 1 Area within a church steeple (6)
- 4 Untainted (4)
- 7 As well (4)
- 8 Erudition, knowledge (8)
- 9 Process (food) (6)
- 10 Linked sequence (5)
- 11 Conversion of a liquid to a gas or vice versa, eg (6,2,5)

- 14 Phonetic alphabet "T" (5)
- 15 Most tardy (6)
- 17 Generous giving of presents or money (8)
- 18 Post (4)
- 19 Wet weather (4)
- 20 Away from the right path (6)

Down

- 1 Aggressively assertive, pugnacious (7)
- 2 Baggy, ill-fitting (5)
- 3 Be in charge (*O, not A*) (4,3,5)
- 4 Dangling piece of jewellery (7)
- 5 Confrontation, set-to (3-2)
- 6 Vigilance (12)
- 12 Nine-sided shape (7)
- 13 Bear witness (7)
- 14 Semi-circular item of regal headwear (5)
- 16 Cornwall-Devon border river (5)

Solution to Crossword 9508



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 6185

4-		3+	1-		18×
30×			40×		
1-	1-	2-		12×	
			2÷		20×
10+	3÷			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 4733

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	>	<input type="text"/>	<	<input type="text"/>
∇					∇	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
∇				∧		
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>		4
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	>	<input type="text"/>	>	<input type="text"/>	<
∇						
3	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	>	<input type="text"/>

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 3692

	32	38	7		39	17		30	3	4
20				13			4	6		
7				24						
				11			6			
29									28	
12			16			38		11		
			34					14		24
	8			29						
	11				16				4	
			4					7		
	4	3	6		34					
22					16				16	
	6			17					7	

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 Left cuts excellent pugilist (3)

— — —

2 Drive one bachelor into open-air pool? (6)

— — — — —

3 Municipality of New Orleans (7)

— — — — —

4 Tell on Dracula? (7)

— — — — —

5 Musician who had a youthful following (4,5)

—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
A	A	B	C	D	D	E	E
E	E	I	I	I	I	I	L
L	L	N	N	O	O	O	P
P	P	R	R	R	S	T	U

Brain Trainer

EASY	68	+ 16	75% OF IT	- 8	÷ 5	SQUARE IT	- 13	50% OF IT	+ 11	÷ 5	ANSWER	
MEDIUM	146	x 3	- 84	+ 1/2 OF IT	+ 87	5/6 OF IT	x 2	- 86	5/8 OF IT	+ 56	ANSWER	
HARDER	319	x 6	+ 784	+ 1/2 OF IT	x 2	- 558	7/16 OF IT	+ 935	7/8 OF IT	+ 887	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** 18 words, average; 24, good; 26, very good; 29, excellent

Yesterday's answers

akee, bake, baker, bark, beak, beaked, beaker, **bedmaker**, berk, brake, break, dark, debark, debeak, deke, demark, drake, drek, embark, kame, keema, kerb, make, maker, mark, marked, meek, rake, reek, remake

Cell Blocks No 5076

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

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 3695

	+		×		= 24
×		×		×	
	×		×		= 140
×		-		×	
2	+		+	8	= 19
=		=		=	
8		12		240	

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 9424

14	15		22	10		11	21	
	8							
14		8		11	17			16
						13		
23	4		7	16		12		
		19		17	17	15		4
8								
15		19		7		7	28	7

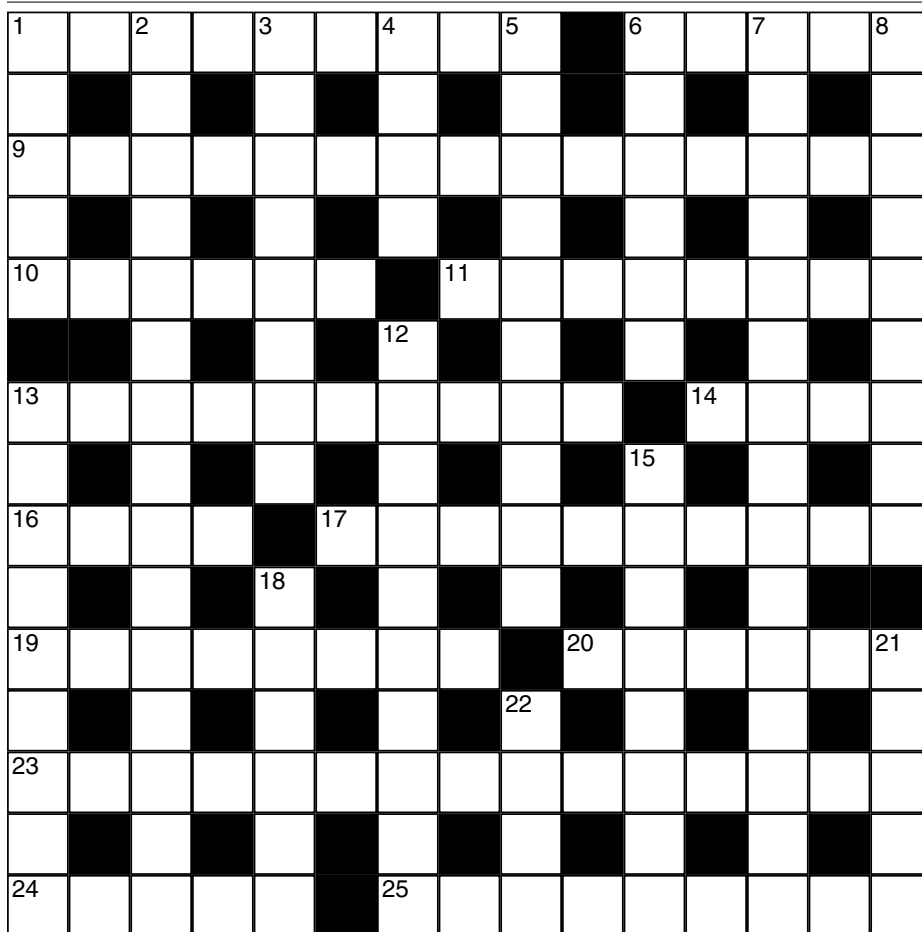
Killer Deadly No 9425

19	3	22					22	
		20	12		21	12		
	25							22
			7		22			
	12				29			
13		19		8		8	18	
	17							9
15		30			20			

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 28,895



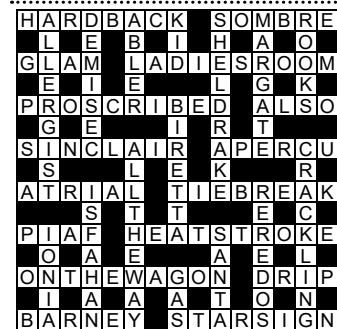
ACROSS

- 1 Excellent work flourished in tense environment? (3-6)
- 6 Programme health professional put together with relevant agency? (2,3)
- 9 Player's agent introducing celebrities (15)
- 10 Make rueful, somewhat reflective, exclamation in bath? (6)
- 11 Petitions involving legal affairs, by island, Indonesian one (8)
- 13 Guests in Parliament: Conservative or Labour? (5,5)
- 14 Scrap religious festival (4)
- 16 Small fish found in channel (4)
- 17 Job on estate — one expected to save up for it? (10)
- 19 What remains after last of our recycling efforts? (8)
- 20 Tonic following tablet I knocked back (6)
- 23 Doing whatever it takes, with piratical or criminal assistance? (2,4,2,2,5)
- 24 Moving supply of things for reading by ambassador (5)
- 25 Last of crop seed's run out: one must keep stocking up! (9)

DOWN

- 1 Match ending in tense tie (5)
- 2 Collect some bread in unusual haste (has pocket emptied)? (4,5,3,3)
- 3 Parrot expression of dismay by president on film (8)
- 4 Temporarily put up shelter in school with parking (4)
- 5 Oddly glum in manner, even speechless (6-4)
- 6 Scenes shot equally (6)
- 7 Hear a low-pitched buzzing in London thoroughfare (11,4)
- 8 Clothes bought here unfashionable and more appropriate (9)
- 12 Not exactly a man to excite, with energy going spare (10)
- 13 Ancient general experiences rout: not quite fully (9)
- 15 One into wine, note, that's average (8)
- 18 Lad's throw every so often about to land (6)
- 21 Fine for interrupting a game (5)
- 22 I repeat: I have a large bill! (4)

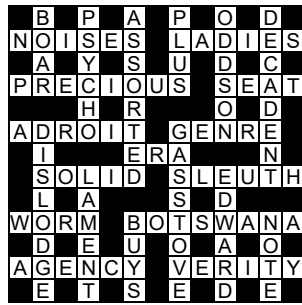
Yesterday's solution 28,894



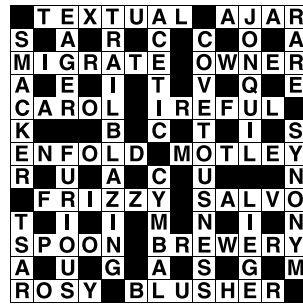
Check today's answers by ringing 0905 757 0141 by midnight. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390.

Solutions

Quick Cryptic 2653



Codeword 5192



Kakuro 3691

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

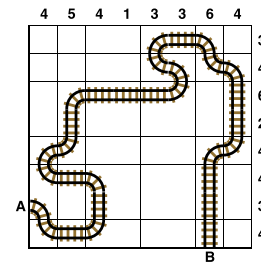
Sudoku 14,844

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

Tetonor 458

45	31	200	23
6 + 39	14 + 17	8 x 25	22 + 1
41	120	25	238
6 + 35	5 x 24	13 + 12	17 x 14
210	33	90	29
35 x 6	25 + 8	18 x 5	24 + 5
23	234	22	156
5 + 18	6 x 39	22 x 1	12 x 13

Train Tracks 2222



Sudoku 14,845

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

Cell Blocks 5075

		2		2
		4		
		2	2	2
14				
	6			
		4		2
			4	5

Set Square 3694

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

Lexica 7357

S		B			
N	E	A	T		
E		N			
E	X	A	C	T	
Z		N			
S	E	W	A	G	E

Sudoku 14,846

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

Futoshiki 4732

5	2	<	3	<	4	1	
		∨					
4	1	2	3	5			
		∨					
2	4	1	5	3			
		∧					
1	3	<	5	2	4		
		∧					
3	<	5	>	4	>	1	2

KenKen 6184

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

Lexica 7358

	C	R	U	S	H	
	H			A		
S	I	L	L	Y		
	E		A		J	
A	F	A	R		A	
				K	E	Y

Today's solutions

Killer 9422

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

Killer 9423

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

Cryptic Quintagram

- 1 Ali
- 2 Libido
- 3 Salerno
- 4 Recount
- 5 Pied Piper

Suko 4094

8	7	1
28	17	
9	4	5
21	14	
6	2	3

Brain Trainer

- Easy 13
- Medium 646
- Harder 4,590

Word watch

Laniary (c) Adapted for tearing (of teeth) (Collins) **Anoesis** (a) Emotion felt without understanding (Chambers) **Vinegaroon** (b) A North American arachnid, a type of whip scorpion (OED)

Chess – Winning Move

1 Nc6! is a brilliant winning thrust. The main point is that after 1 ... Qxb4 2 Ne7+! Kh8 3 Rxb7+! Kxh7 4 Rh1+ Bh3 5 Rxb3+ Qh4 6 Rxb4 is mate. Black has no good defence as 1 ... Qxg5 is met by 2 Ne7+ Kh8 and now the best is an echo of the main variation with 3 Qxg4! Qxg4 4 Rxb7+! again mating