

Sudoku Mild No 15,189

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

Difficult No 15,190

Fiendish No 15,191

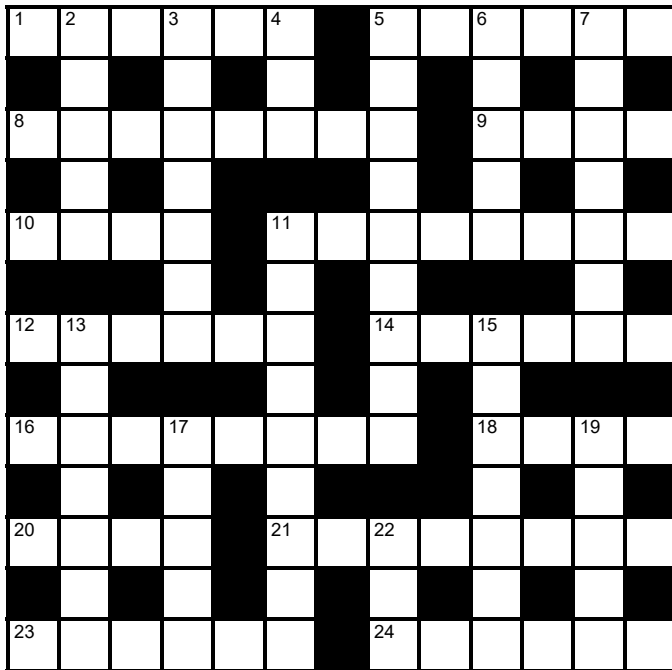
				2				
			8			2	5	
6	9	2			1			
	1				9		2	8
	5						7	
7	3		4				6	
			1			8	3	4
	6	7			4			
				3				

4	7			8	3			
	8	9		6				
	1	6		3			9	
					5	7	8	
7								
	5	7			6	9		
3		4			9	8	7	
	2		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 2768 by Wurm



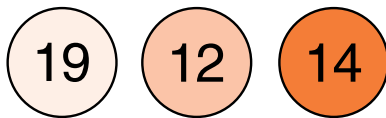
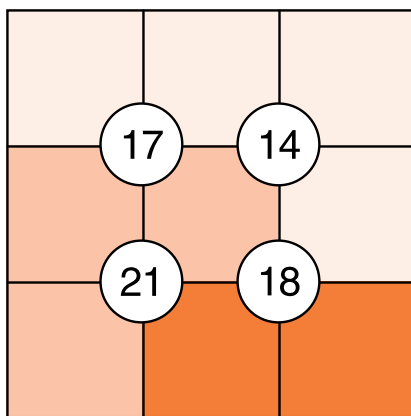
Across

- 1 Man contracted female condition (6)
- 5 Bit players unusually small (6)
- 8 Horse from Conservative hunt set out (8)
- 9 MDMA tablets reportedly providing comfort (4)
- 10 In due time a refusal from Macron? (4)
- 11 See old husband in bar finds way out (8)
- 12 Inattentive knight wild beast devours (6)
- 14 Endless joy in swallow — one born to fly (6)
- 16 Wild area kept for little parrot (8)
- 18 Cosy home in north-eastern street (4)
- 20 Obscure band that rivalled Oasis (4)
- 21 The London Eye? (5,3)
- 23 Fibrous tissue beginning to decay in joint (6)
- 24 Deal with Davey finally making pact (6)

Down

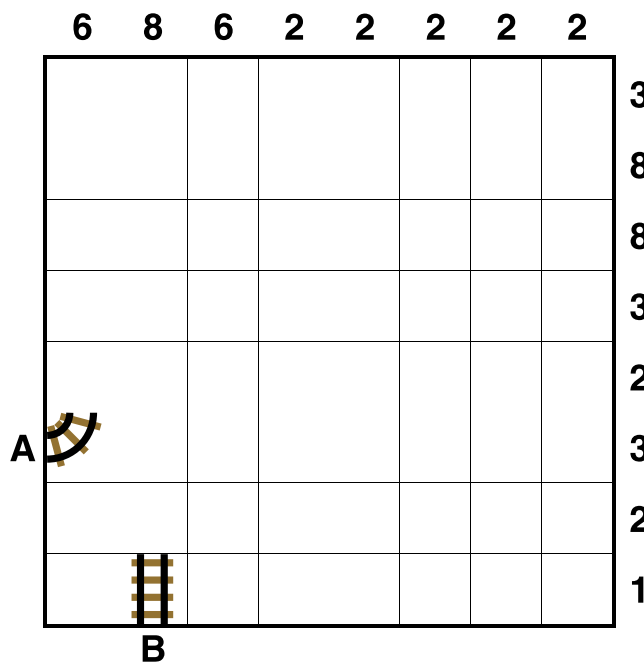
- 2 Pale like Scottish female (5)
- 3 Secret sharer's son confessed in A&E (7)
- 4 That from Yvonne periodically (3)
- 5 Sociable old pirate stops avoiding alcohol (9)
- 6 Power found in climate ethics (5)
- 7 Pardon having a crack about bishop (7)
- 11 American host, character with servant (9)
- 13 Drunken Liberal's proud words? (7)
- 15 Italian waterfowl — small number inside (7)
- 17 Broadcast excellent by socialist (5)
- 19 Prompt singer Taylor? (5)
- 22 Louse egg in upturned container (3)

Suko No 4208



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 2335



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

Squailer

- a A weighted stick for throwing
- b A sudden spell of foul weather
- c A spring-blooming bulb

Rubescient

- a Generously proportioned
- b Blushing
- c Unnecessarily complicated

Lenitic

- a Inhabiting still water
- b Convex on both sides
- c Marxist

Backgammon Chris Bray

More from Monte Carlo

The world championship is not only a great tournament to play in, but it also provides huge learning opportunities for those not able or willing to make the journey to Monte Carlo. That was especially true this year because so many of the matches were streamed on YouTube.

As noted last week, the commentary team was strengthened by the inclusion of top players such as Ryan Rebelo, David Wells and Steve Sax. One of the best ways to improve your game is to watch matches with accurate and insightful commentary. I spent many hours (my wife will confirm this!) watching this year's matches.

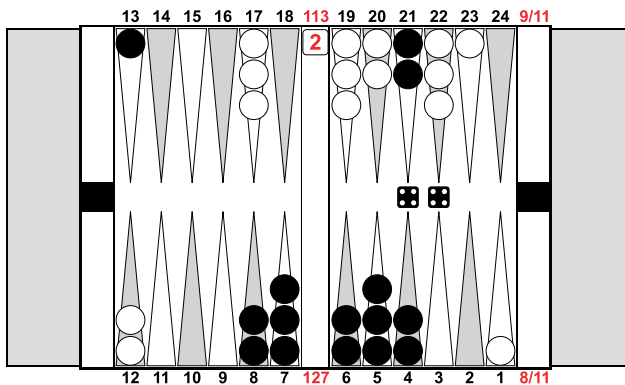
Ideally, you should decide how you would play each move or make each cube decision before the players make their decisions. For those that you disagree with or do not understand, you can take a screenshot and then analyse the positions later using Extreme Gammon (XG). I have used this learning method for many years.

I found this week's position very instructive. Wilcox Snellings

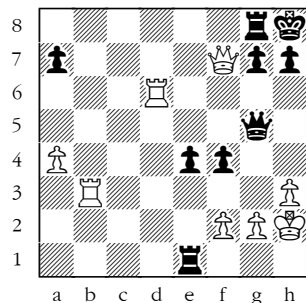
(Black) was trailing 8-9 to 11 and had double fours to play. In my mind I quickly played 13/1*, 5/1, making a four-point home board and putting White on the bar. I was very surprised when Wilcox played 13/9, 7/3(2), 5/1*, leaving three blots exposed. What had he seen that I had missed?

After my play, Black's position is very static and the gaps on his 3 and 2-pts will be hard to fill. Wilcox's play is much more dynamic. He immediately created a strong broken prime which could quickly become a winning six-point prime. He had also taken note of the blot on White's 2-pt (Black's 23-pt). If White hits from the bar, Black may have a chance to pick up that White blot, which will increase Black's gammon chances.

Wilcox took very little time to find this difficult move and he was rewarded when White stayed on the bar. He went on to win a single game. His years of experience had enabled him to quickly find the right play. XG confirms that 13/9, 7/3(2), 5/1* is the best move and my move would have been an error. Hopefully I will use this technique to good effect in future games.



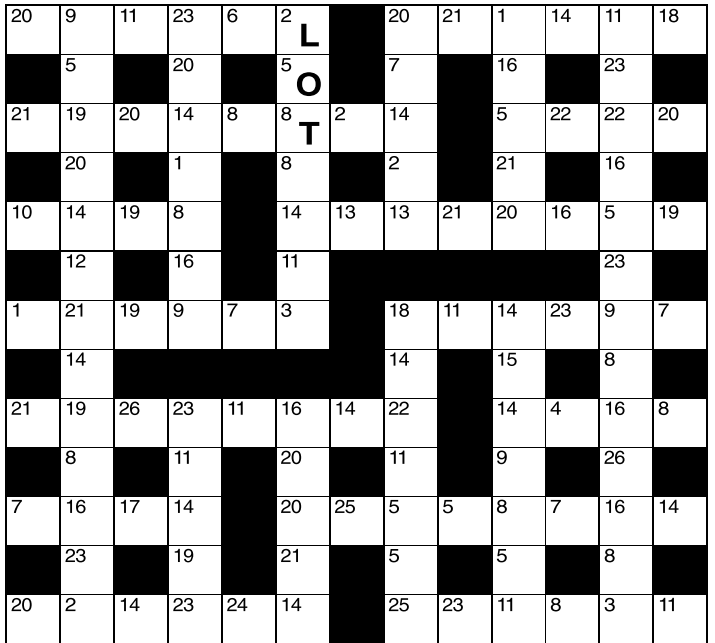
Winning Move



White to play. This position is from Pal-Shafi, British Championship, Hull 2024.

Sometimes in a game there is a fleeting tactical opportunity in what appears to be a quiet position. Here White played 1 Rd7 with the idea of 2 Qxg8+ and 3 Rb8+ mating. However, Black defended with 1 ... h6 and the game was eventually drawn. With a little more urgency White could have won. How?

Codeword No 5307



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

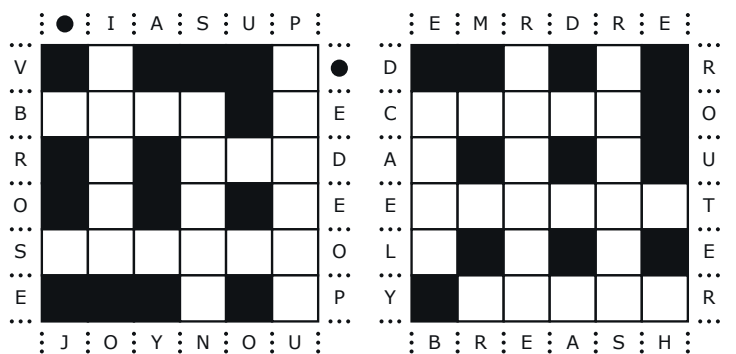
1	L	3	4	5	O	7	8	T	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	

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).

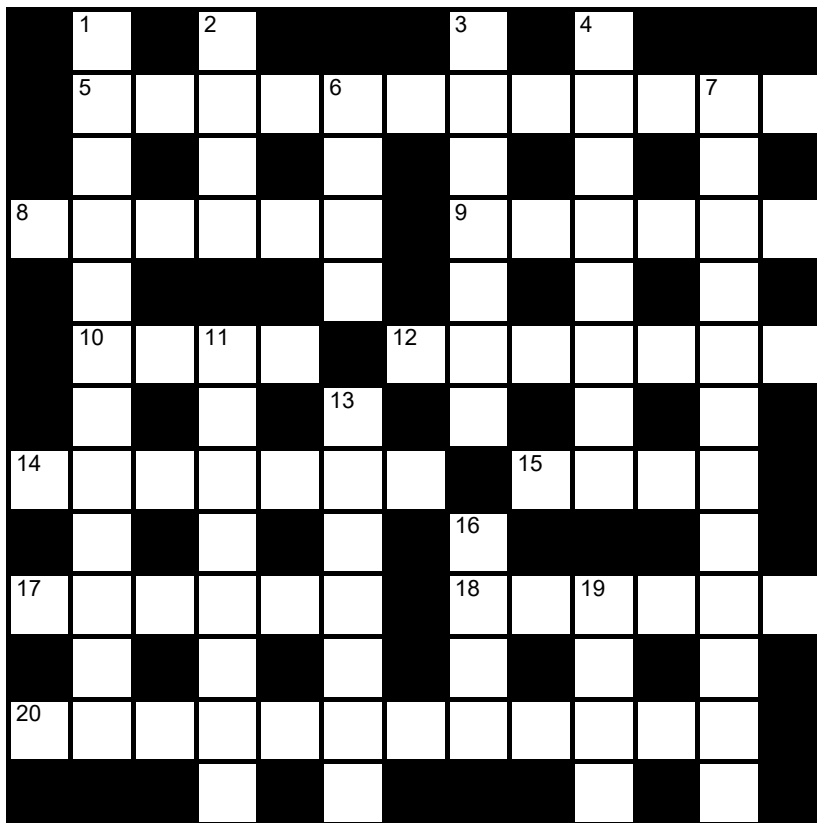
Lexica Easy No 7625

Hard No 7626



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 9623



Across

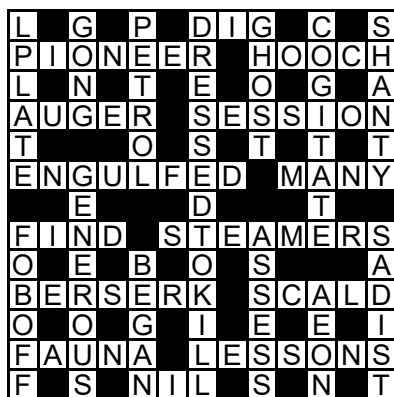
- 5 Illegality (12)
- 8 Book of church texts (6)
- 9 Means of payment (6)
- 10 Vehicle's oil reservoir (4)
- 12 Vault or receptacle for bones (7)
- 14 Deep-fried ball of mashed chickpeas (7)

- 15 Head of a university faculty or college (4)
- 17 Published, distributed (6)
- 18 Season (6)
- 20 Be greater in influence or quantity (12)

Down

- 1 Pre-Christian Roman ruler (6,6)
- 2 Addition symbol (4)
- 3 Ostracised person, pariah (7)
- 4 Anxious of one's status or position (8)
- 6 Cunning, guileful (4)
- 7 Four, nine or sixteen, eg (6,6)
- 11 Acknowledgment of guilt or error (3,5)
- 13 Requiring (7)
- 16 Medieval weapon; aromatic spice (4)
- 19 Defrost (4)

Solution to Crossword 9622



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 6299

2-		10+	12×		
2÷	1-				5
		2-		9+	13+
9+			5-		
2÷		2-			
5-			11+		

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.

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Futoshiki No 4847

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	3	<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"/>				2
<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"/>

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 3806

	14	26		3	12	21		9	23
17			6				17		
11			27						4
18			30		7			11	
13				13	12			3	
		27			27		7		
	16	26			4				
	16		26					12	27
9			7			18			
14			12		4	11			
	32		17					4	
	16			10				9	

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.

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Quintagram®

Solve all five cryptic clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Quick look concealed by Franciscans (4)

— — — —

2 Right to stop an elderly poet (6)

— — — — —

3 Animosity: Republican's thrown out invented story! (7)

— — — — — — —

4 Can occupant reform and rise? (7)

— — — — — — —

5 No blame wrongly attached to new earl, say (8)

— — — — — — — —

A	A	A	A	B	C	C	D
D	E	E	F	I	I	I	L
L	M	N	N	N	N	N	N
O	O	O	R	R	S	S	T

Brain Trainer

EASY	9	SQUARE IT	+ 15	÷ 8	+ 9	x 2	+ 11	x 2	- 14	÷ 4	ANSWER	
MEDIUM	75	x 3	+ 53	x 2	+ 98	50% OF IT	+ 78	+ 1/5 OF IT	- 98	+ 1/4 OF IT	ANSWER	
HARDER	138	x 7	+ 387	x 3	- 199	90% OF IT	+ 891	40% OF IT	- 899	x 7	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 13 words, average; 18, good; 25, very good; 33, excellent

Yesterday's answers
 cine, coin, **coincide**, cone, coned, conic, deni, dine, done, icon, iconic, indie, iodine, ionic, nice, nide, node, once

Cell Blocks No 5190

2		4										
6												5
			8									
		4								12	2	
		2									4	

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 3809

	+		x		= 22
x		x		-	
	+	7	+		= 18
x		-		+	
	+		x	9	= 45
=		=	=		
48		17		6	

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 9652

12	12	6		3		8	30		
				13			6		
14	7	26		21		3	4	8	
						15			
11		3		11		18	23		
4		22						5	
16		7				3	8		
14			18	14		28	12		

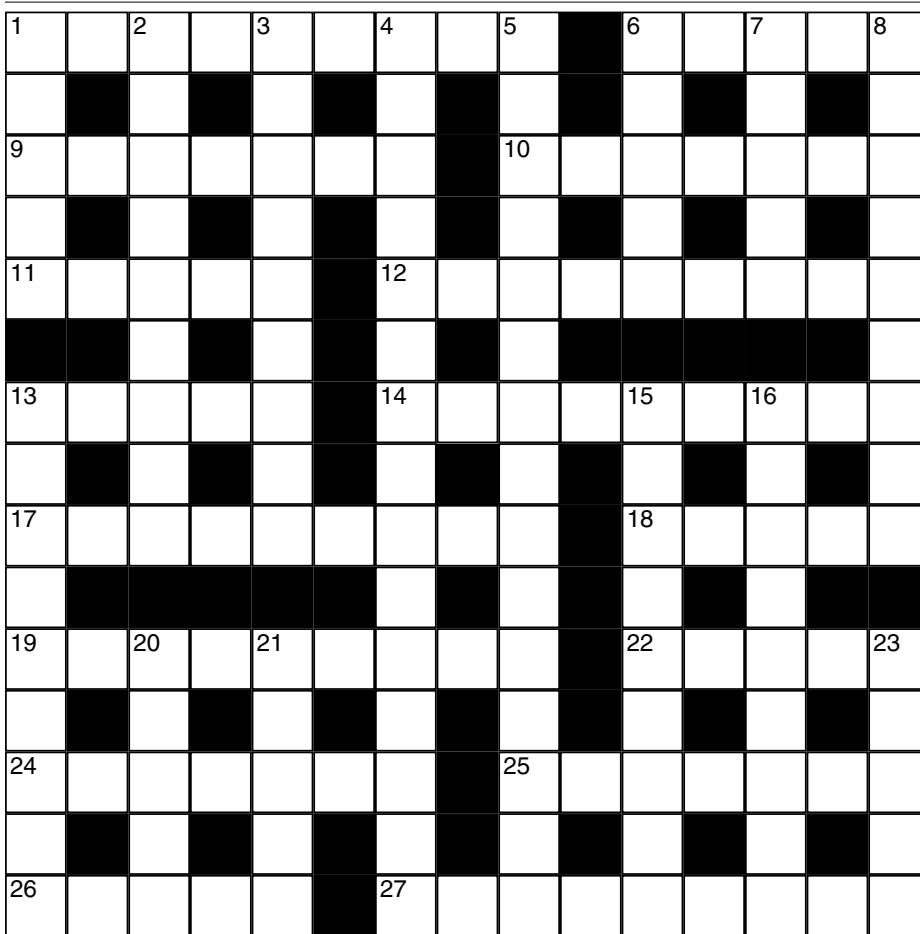
Killer Deadly No 9653

10	23			9	27		8		
	25						15		
		10	15		11		24		
					19				
18			20			23		17	
	16		18				10		
				15					
23	10						23		
				16					

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 29,009



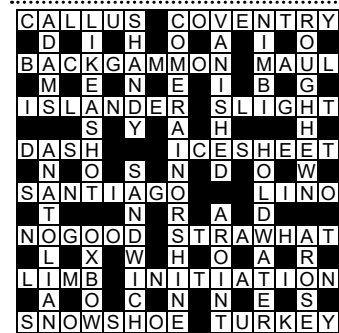
ACROSS

- 1 Following delay man makes US city (9)
- 6 By the sound of it, remained sober (5)
- 9 Egg beater or another kitchen utensil (7)
- 10 Blood group negative involves nothing sinister (7)
- 11 The short temper of people in general (5)
- 12 One who assists eating English fare (9)
- 13 Skill of service in court (5)
- 14 Performer, thoroughly fulfil Baker's role in audition (9)
- 17 Playing duet with horns, possibly aimed too low (9)
- 18 Henry leaves some time in the morning for liaison (5)
- 19 Persistent cautions deployed involving ecstasy (9)
- 22 Faithful without pretence (5)
- 24 Sight, or what may adversely affect it (7)
- 25 With stealth, some regressive amoebae kill, eerily (3-4)
- 26 Alas, report 550 cracks (5)
- 27 Finally down, wearing the tie, dressed for big birthday? (9)

DOWN

- 1 Surface — the last labelled on an icosahedron? (5)
- 2 Previously referred to a course warning delivered? (9)
- 3 Senior officers desert rising celebrity (9)
- 4 Outcome for Hook is barely anything (1,4,2,3,5)
- 5 At sea, meet storm fronts everywhere (4,4,2,5)
- 6 Small and large diamonds fade (5)
- 7 Protracted answer leads to a more advanced state (5)
- 8 One ruminating about southern Ilium — Shiva? (9)
- 13 Legion being more insignificant? (9)
- 15 Recorder reformed Fleet gaol (9)
- 16 Double volume in hurry to become a thousand (9)
- 20 Miles performing soaring finale (2,3)
- 21 Sentimental, having conversely upset companion (5)
- 23 Power to secure the darts matches in successive locations (5)

Yesterday's solution 29,008



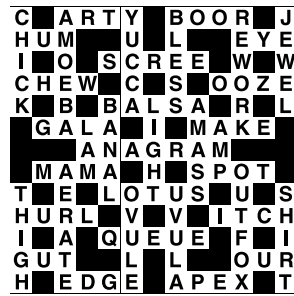
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Solutions

Quick Cryptic 2767



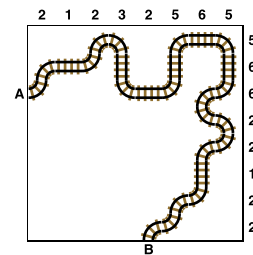
Codeword 5306



Kakuro 3805

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

Train Tracks 2334



Sudoku 15,186

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

Tetonor 496

182	33	90	57
7 x 26	7 + 26	2 + 88	56 + 1
30	135	18	60
3 + 27	45 x 3	16 + 2	58 + 2
116	48	162	32
58 x 2	3 + 45	9 x 18	16 x 2
56	81	27	176
56 x 1	3 x 27	9 + 18	2 x 88

Sudoku 15,187

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

Cell Blocks 5189

2			8		
			6		
4	4				5
		6			
2		6		6	

Set Square 3808

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

Lexica 7623

	D	U	E	L	
S		P		A	
J	E	R	S	E	Y
	N		E		O
	D	O	T		U
					T

Sudoku 15,188

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

Futoshiki 4846

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

KenKen 6298

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

Lexica 7624

D	I	M	E		
E		E			B
C	A	N			A
I		H	E	E	D
D		I			E
E		R	O	B	

Today's solutions

Killer 9650

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

Killer 9651

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

Cryptic Quintagram

- 1 Scan
- 2 Arnold
- 3 Fiction
- 4 Sardine
- 5 Nobleman

Suko 4208

8	4	6
17	14	
2	3	1
21	18	
7	9	5

Brain Trainer

- Easy 23
- Medium 485
- Harder 5,929

Word watch

- Squailer** (a) A weighted stick for throwing (*Collins*)
- Rubescence** (b) Blushing (*Chambers*)
- Lenitic** (a) Inhabiting still water (*OED*)

Chess – Winning Move

- 1 Rb5! Qh4 (forced) 2 Rh5!
- Qxf2 is again forced to avoid material loss but now there follows: 3 Rxf7+! Kxf7
- 4 Qh5 mate