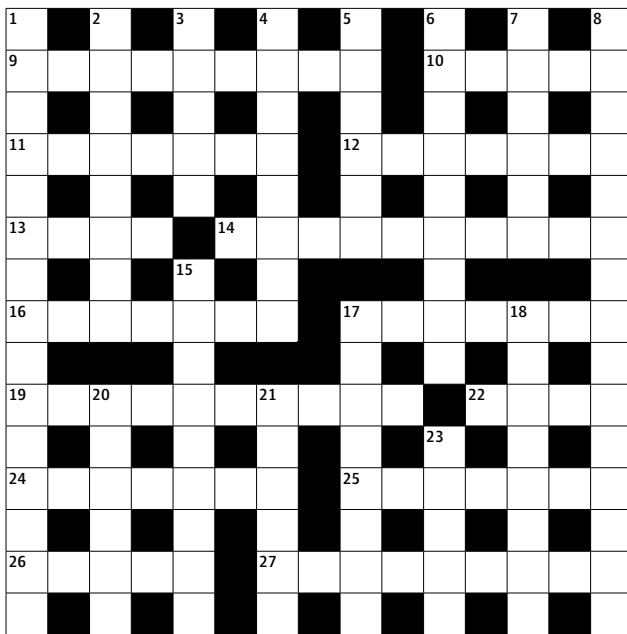


Guardian cryptic crossword



No 26,884 set by Paul

The first five correct entries drawn each week win Guardian Style and Secrets of the Setters, worth £28.99.

Entries to: The Guardian Crossword No 26,884, P.O. Box 6603, Birmingham, B26 3PR, or Fax to 0121-742 1313 by first post on Friday. Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday 23 May.

Across

- 9** Dirty dog's ending in no little trouble (3-6)
10 China in Japan, damage between the two (5)
11 Saving a little time, don't stay to see opera singer (7)
12 Union supporter on course to return in Chinese dynasty (7)
13 Runner caught someone at the top (4)
14 Straggly branch OK with tall, hollow bush (10)
16 Painter, way less than a month through the alcohol (7)
17 Picture lover in ecstasy during fling (7)
19 Drooling, one throwing up during chant (10)
22 Shake hands on mammal with flippers (4)
24 Bird I adore's heading for flowering shrub (7)
25,26 Looking away when gran nude, is it surprising? (7,5)
27 Leader, the best of the bunch? (3,6)

Down

- 1** Essentially, fat insects pumped with lead shot, then pared off (6-3,6)
2 Torch, innocent thing in iron and gold (8)
3 Certain limit (5)
4 Giant captured by boy, well I never! (6,2)

- 5** Briefly witty as some comic, I'm on guard being sent up (6)
6 Enjoy a furore very much (4,5)
7 Las Vegas establishment equally popular, business raking it in (8)
8 Noted communication error mine, alert leader in government when trebly confused (7,8)
15 Spooner's poem to Chelsea that may go to one's head? (3,6)
17 Monument, knock one up in church (8)
18,23 A quality detailed, and among the best, as a nation's aspiration for a better life (8,5)
20 Leg before wicket partly, one way to get out? (2,4)
21 US property concerned with key industry, ultimately (6)
23 See 18

Solution No. 26,883

