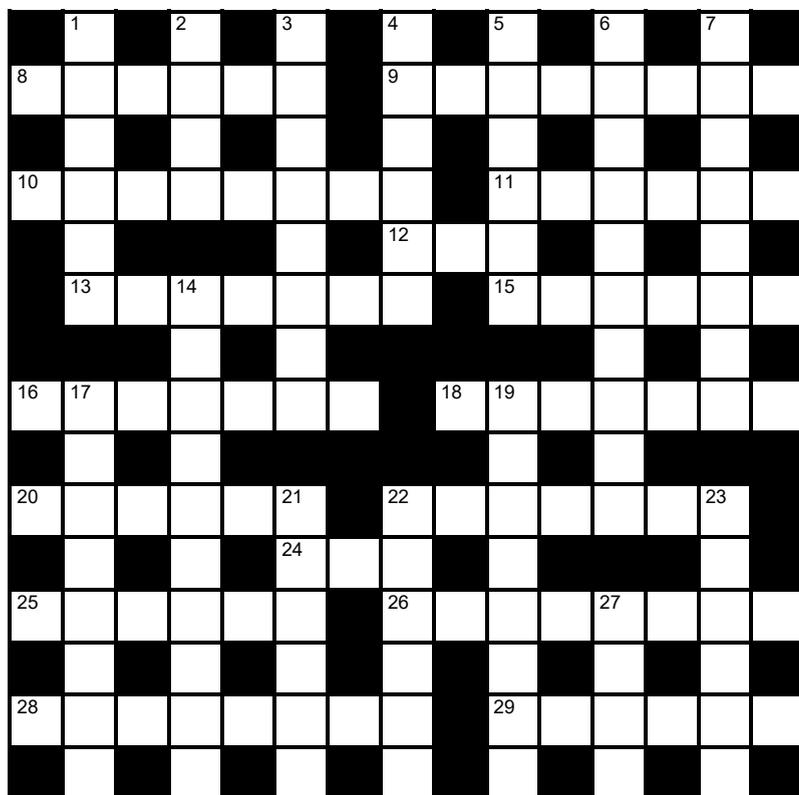


by Knut

In all bar four clues, a single letter is omitted from the wordplay



Across

- 8 Where to take a bullet for Aragon's principal painter? (6)
- 9 Taking into account battling struggle for Worcestershire openers... (2,4,2)
- 10 ...using too much time fiddling with new glove when pinching run (8)
- 11 Observe absence of twitch (6)
- 12 The French king's play area for sexy birds (3)
- 13 Fuel left to start fire (7)
- 15 Be there when the news is announced (6)
- 16 Flowers? Sheldon occasionally has half a dozen sent round (7)

- 18 It helps to pump liquid gold to Virginia (7)
- 20 American - very loud - gets stuck into American drinks (6)
- 22 Having to move round the office administering kiss of death, poor Asif gets sacked (7)
- 24 Sanchez regularly picked up a card (3)
- 25 Express remorse, say, about time (6)
- 26 Head of Beeb notes withdrawal of key DNA testing programme (5,3)
- 28 Wilful destruction; a bad smell time after time (8)
- 29 Over the sea in Calais, tense conspiracy of secrecy (6)

Down

- 1 *Prodigy* rave out of control at first light (6)
- 2 Threaten what belongs to you and me (4)
- 3 A chavvy tv programme featuring Charlie in the city (8)
- 4 It helps to advertise fireplace (6)
- 5 Trump's Ford Transit leading? (6)
- 6 Devour butterfly, possibly a result of too much sun (10)
- 7 Ancient area surrounding conservative southern Indian citadel (8)
- 14 Well done, sticky mess; food served on board railway (4,3,3)

- 17 Hotel on river's a managed property (5-3)
- 19 2, a tv programme producer of 80s Vienna? (8)
- 21 It guides leader of terrorists into heart of Yemeni capital (3-3)
- 22 Scottish islands banished ex-Tory leader; the language! (6)
- 23 Immanuel kidnaps Romeo in Africa (it could be a bluff) (6)
- 27 Bridge opponents' article (4)