

Summary

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1. June Competition

The June competition with Space Invaders-themed grid by Pickles and clued by Anax was won by R J Green of Llangynidr Crickhowell. Excellent solving! And maintaining a hundred per cent record.

Feedback included:

I think this might be the most difficult puzzle to date. It's the clues which were difficult of course, especially the asterisked ones. An enjoyable one this! JM

Clues to Player and Hiving were most appreciated in a very enjoyable 3D. Many thanks Anax. Reminded me of the table top game of Space Invaders found in some hotel lounges in the 80s. Great fun! PC

Clever use of 'Space Invaders'. AS

We found this very difficult, but we usually do find Anax's puzzles challenging. Many thanks. SC

I was really a bit slow not to get the hint from the graphics. Found some of the clues harder than usual but finished strongly once the penny dropped. PD

It represents a nostalgic time for me as my youngest son discovered arcade video games. He was 15 at the time and I had to drive (and park) in the City to bring him home each afternoon.

He turned 55 last week!

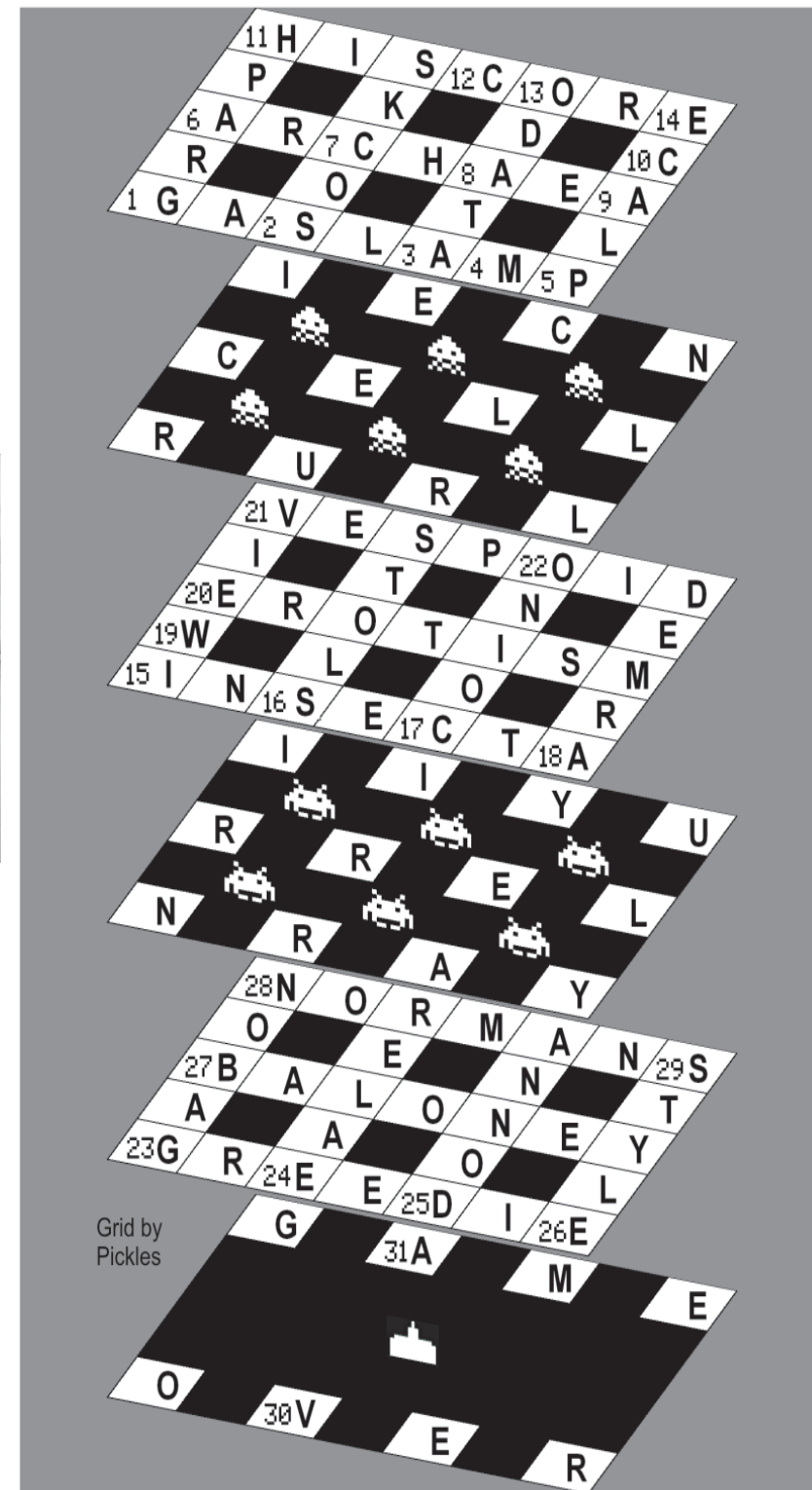
Thanks again for another great puzzle. T&CH

I think my brain has been invaded by these pesky aliens. Thanks to all involved and good luck to all the solvers. S&BB

June 2018 Anax Pickles



The theme is **Space Invaders**, the classic video game which was originally released in June 1978 (referred to hereafter as X Y). The importance of X Y in the history of video games (now a massive part of the mainstream entertainment industry) cannot be overstated, and over forty years the graphics and game itself have become iconic and something of a shorthand for video games in general.



Thank you for this latest and, I think, most enjoyable puzzle. I attach my solution, which I hope is correct, though I am less sure than previously, mainly owing to 2 away, which I didn't quite get: maybe it is a literary reference (Dr Seuss?). I have put some comments on the answer grid's 'feedback' space, but would like to add a short anecdote here.

In about 1980 or 1981, when I was living in Cornwall as a young languages teacher, I had occasion to visit the Lanivet Inn, which for some reason had a giant panda as its pub sign (I wonder if it still does). There one could play *Space Invaders* on a horizontal device rather like a coffee-table. The instructions were in a decidedly non-native form of English, and I remember they began with the polite request 'Please shoot the aliens'. I thought this was comical at the time, but perhaps I was lucky for my young adulthood to coincide with an innocent mid-point between the end of institutional nazism and the return of 'accepted' xenophobia...
(Please edit as you see fit: I know you are not a political organisation!)
All the best, and I can't wait for September... AC

It was touch and go this month for me, since I have been really busy, and away, but you were not kidding -- what a brilliant puzzle! It is a real work of genius. Pickles' grid design is such an inspired match between the different directional movements of words in 3D, and the simple but unpredictable descent of the space invaders. It set my pulse racing again just thinking about them, and remembering the many hours I spent playing those consoles in my youth! Anax's clues are so clever, and a sustained joy, with a compactness and simplicity that also echoes the aesthetics of that game-world. I think my favourite is 25 June clue (player as space invaders' enemy!).

Hats off to both of them, and I am so pleased I managed to finish in time
Keep enjoying the freakishly good weather.MS

Thank you and all the others for all the work you put in to these marvellous puzzles.

I fear the Aliens have mashed my brains this month, but time will tell.

Hard to believe it's been forty years since Space Invaders. This was a fine puzzle to solve, with 'space' answers expanding to accommodate 'Invaders'. And finally an amusing message in the bottom tier. Many thanks to Anax and Pickles. EL

Grid & Puzzle Description contd....

The grid is a representation of the game using graphics from the original version (including the font used for the cell numbers) and is intended to appear as white cells and graphics on a black background as the game was originally monochrome. I have used two of the different types of aliens appearing in the game in between unchecked cells in the second and fourth tiers from the top, and the player's laser cannon at the base, in the centre of the bottom tier. These graphics mean the theme is a given for many solvers but the emphasis is on the five thematic treatments and the final grid rather than spotting the subject matter itself.
X Y does not appear in the grid itself but there will be a space to write it below the grid. The fact that there are no crossing letters for X Y is balanced by the graphics, the anagram clue, the thematic treatments, and other references in the grid and clues.

The five thematic clued answers are all treated as X Y, i.e. they are “invaders” of a “space”, so each is inserted into a different word meaning “space”, making a new word or phrase in each case.
There is also an example each of X and Y in clue answers and several other allusions to the gameplay itself and video games in general, with potential for more thematic allusions in the clues.
The completed grid has “**GAME OVER**” in the bottom tier, and in the top row (“rank” in the preamble) it has “**HISCORE**” (unclued but fully checked) which appears at the top of the screen in the original game.
The game continued until the player was defeated, so could not be “won” as such; this is referred to in the last line of the preamble.

This most imaginative 3D grid was awarded best grid in the 2016 tie-break competition, for which Ben Lovering was awarded the Ray Parry-Morris Trophy.

Here is my answer grid, which took an embarrassing amount of Google power!
Although it's considered an old, vintage game I'm afraid it seemed all too modern to me. Even Sonic the Hedgehog could outwit me! DS

We really struggled with 29 – SKYPE, STYLE or SKYRE? In the end we went for the spac invader (Styre is a Dr Who baddie). We did enjoy the theme J&JH

What a multi-layered feat of cryptic engineering! Just like a good computer game it has increasing levels of challenge. Did anyone else notice the bonus word in the muddle row of the second tier? JT

This month's theme was displayed for all to see, though it wasn't easy to think of all the appropriate spaces for the asterisked clues. I'm not happy about the definition on the 16th, as I don't think there's any type of GAS-LAMP which has a wick - they usually use a mantle. Also, on the 9th, I've put CEORL, from the definition, but don't see how the wordplay works. I haven't yet got enough in this month's extra to see how anything fits together, so will have to come back later. PM

It took a long while for the penny to drop on the XY solutions. My favourite clue was the straightforward Day 15 (GABON). Won't be able to look at a map of Africa again without thinking of it. JB

The game is over and I'm submitting my entry for the June 3D. I finished it in the nick of time as I leave early next week for a boat trip along the Norwegian coast. Not expecting the heatwave you've been enjoying in the UK but I hope at least there's no low cloud and drizzle! However, if so, I might just stand a chance of getting the June Extra done! It was a complete mystery at first glance (well, a bit more than a glance to be honest!).

I hope you're enjoying the sunshine anyway. Jbn

S.I. never a favourite – give me a pin table any day. Instructions for the asterisked clues took a bit of understanding but after a couple of solutions I got it.

12, isn't DONNA Italian, Spanish DONA with accent on 'N')?

27, simply a rhyme for Bone?

6 and 30 rather puzzling. MJ

I completely messed up the thematic clues first time around thinking that the two words defined were for the two words that had to be inserted into each other, not for the shorter word and the word formed when another room for SPACE surrounds it, that was a super nice touch. GH

Simpl4e immediate theme with clever X-Y clueing. Some new words but all came well from clues. Favourites STYLE VESPOID. DM

May was Pasquale - June, Anax. You're not taking and prisoners this year. I had pre-guessed the theme from the pictorial additions to the grid, which is just as well because I got INSECTA and VESPOID early on and might've been led into a "Creepy Crawly" theme.

Indeed VESPOID was the only one of the asterisked clues I had (purely from the 'like a wasp' definition) till very late - I hadn't understood the solving instructions at all and thought the 5 answers interacted with each other - but loved it when I realised. CHA in AREA making ARCHAEA was what made it clear.

Last one in was CEORL - I'd heard of a churl and often use the adjective, but this needed looking up after struggling with C?O?L and finally thinking of CEO for boss. An education about pre-Norman conquest Britain ensued involving Eorls and Ceorls - Wikipedia, what would I do without you - now considering upping my churlish regular £2 Wiki donation.

Apart from Ceorl new words for me: GRAPHIS, MATADORE and COCOYAM
From the theme, I wrote in GAME OVER at the bottom after getting 1 letter there. Something I'm very familiar with.

I include a scan of the "Game Over" strip from an old Spirou comic.

Every week in this strip out little hero tries to rescue the princess and find his way out of the game - it usually ends gruesomely. AJR

Enjoyable as always, made more so by the additional puzzle within five of the clues ... I always appreciate these extra mind stretchers. There are three answers which I cannot parse, duly marked 'unsure'. JR

This was very, very good - both grid and clues together; often, it's one or the other. And yet - it took me 29 days to work out what was going on with XY. (It would have been fewer if I'd twigged earlier that this wasn't PacMan.) What a clever device! Congrats all round. PA

I didn't understand the clues to several of the answers, viz ARMED, CEORL, PLACE, PLAYER, SOCKS (although I think a rhyme for "hose" is involved) and VERSUS. So I guess 1 or 2 of those are not correct ! HE

Well the images and the memories kind of gave the game away, but I thought this was a really fun approach to the theme and loved the amount of thematic material in the grid, plus it is always fun to solve clues written by Anax.

Got the theme in about 20 seconds, possibly the result of many school lunch breaks playing Space Invaders in the station buffet bar. I can't for the life of me work out 17 but GNASHES is the only word I can think of that fits. GB

2. June 2018 Clues & Exp[lanations]

#	Dir3ction – Clues – Letter Count	Answers	NOTES
1	6d One extremely bitter about being bitter (5)	ACERB	ACE + B[itte]R<
2	8d An opening for invention like Y (5)	ALIEN	A(LIE)N
3	3d Notice cuts in new care home for X Y (6)	ARCADE	AD in *CARE
4	6ac* Micro-organisms in tea (3) ? (7)	ARCHAEA CHA (in AREA)	DD via wordplay
5	31up Emerges from Atari session (6)	ARISES	ARI(S)ES
6	18aw Like Y and players of popular medleys (5)	ARMED	Hidden
7	27ac* Single bunk (4) ? (7)	BALONEY LONE (in BAY)	DD via wordplay
8	10to-2,9d See friend holding Mass without emotion (6)	CALMLY	C AL(M)LY
9	7d One low-ranking boss at start of game (5)	CEORL	CEO RL
10	12ac-2,13d Root firm, shy mum's upset (7)	COCOYAM	CO COY + MA<
11	17aw,22ba-2 X Y was so trendy in a box (6)	COINOP	CO(IN)OP
12	25aw Read news with a Spanish lady (5)	DONNA	DO N/N A
13	14d Loony needs to accept university application? (3,3)	END USE	NEEDS* around U
14	20ac* Flatbreads for the love of it (5) ? (7)	EROTISM ROTI (in ESM)	DD via wordplay

15	23aw Talk about an African country (5)	GABON	GAB ON
16	1ac* Wicked device for seeing rubbish (4) ? (3,4)	GAS LAMP SLAM (in GAP)	DD via wordplay
17	1aw,11ac-3 Video display's not about to show some lichens (7)	GRAPHIS	GRAPHI[c]S
18	23ac,26d-2 Fail to stop feminist wanting more (8)	GREEDIER	GREE(DIE)R
19	1d Foreigner group's first drummer (6)	GRINGO	G[roup] RINGO
20	11d Y's behaviour in HGV, I suspect (6)	HIVING	INHGVI*
21	15ac Bugs one can't see, mostly camouflaged (7)	INSECTA	I + CANTSE[e]*
22	4ba-2,3aw,13ac A bit enthralled by new version of game (8)	MATADORE	M(A TAD)ORE
23	28ac Y's standard response (7)	NORMANS	NORMANS
24	5aw X's copper spike (5)	PLACE	P LACE
25	5d Arrange parts for each X Y enemy? (6)	PLAYER	P(LAY)ER
26	16aw 11 Xs? Ultimately this many (5)	SLOTS	[thi]S LOTS
27	2aw Hose that poet may see in box? (5)	SOCKS	Rhyme example
28	29to Reversing on road, see address (5)	STYLE	ELY< after ST
29	30up-2,24aw Turn over skin of animal one bred for meat (6)	VEALER	VEER around A[nima]L
30	30up Suspect gun is rejected in this game mode (6)	VERSUS	SUS REV<
31	21ac* Like a wasp's ability to sense things (3) ? (7)	VESPOID ESP (in VOID)	DD via wordplay
32	21to,15d-3 Struggle with speed, having screen on? (7)	VIEWING	VIE WING
33	19to-2,15ac-2 Get snake to lose tail (3)	WIN	WIN[d]

3. June Extra with directionsd

I hope you received a directed version of the brilliant June Extra by Pickles which was first published as a challenging jigsaw.

The directed update follows in the next pages. The penny-drop moment is wonderful.

Finally, thank you for supporting our project to help youngsters in need.

Best wishes Eric Westbrook

Registered Blind RNIB Member
& Public Speaker

3D Crossword Designer *Sirius*
Software development for
independent blind crossword solving

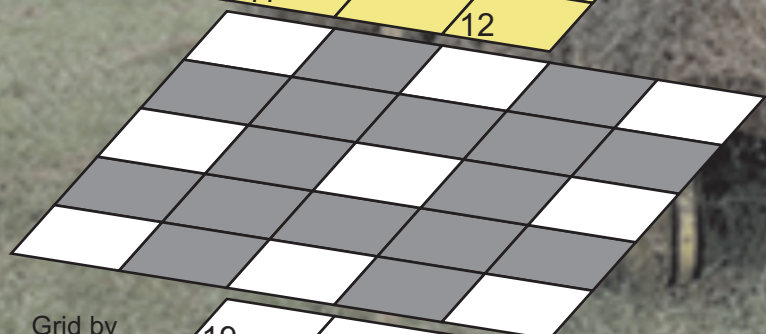
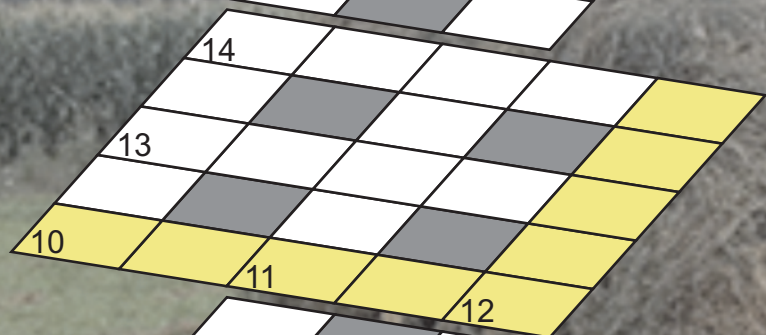
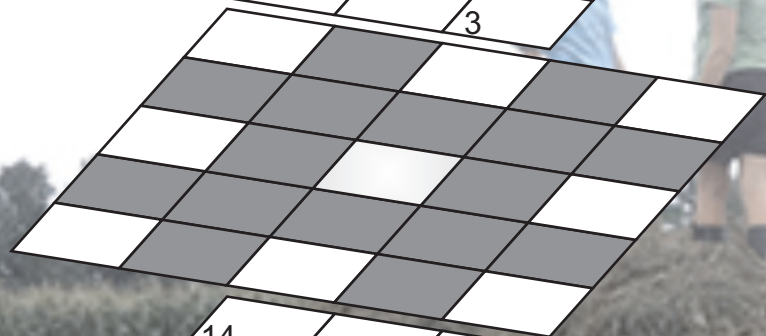
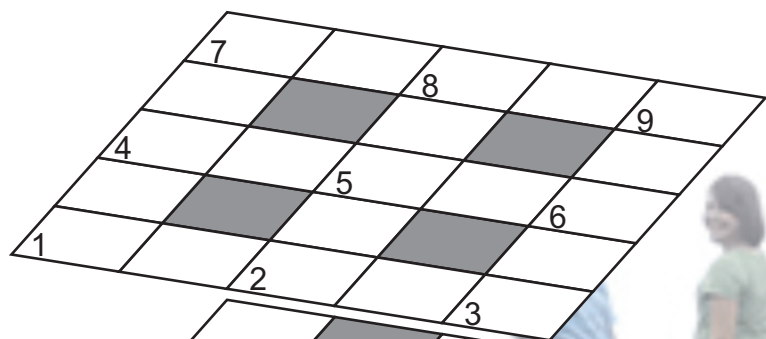
June Extra 2018 Pickles

All solutions are of five letters. Two solutions are formed of two words each and a third is an abbreviation.

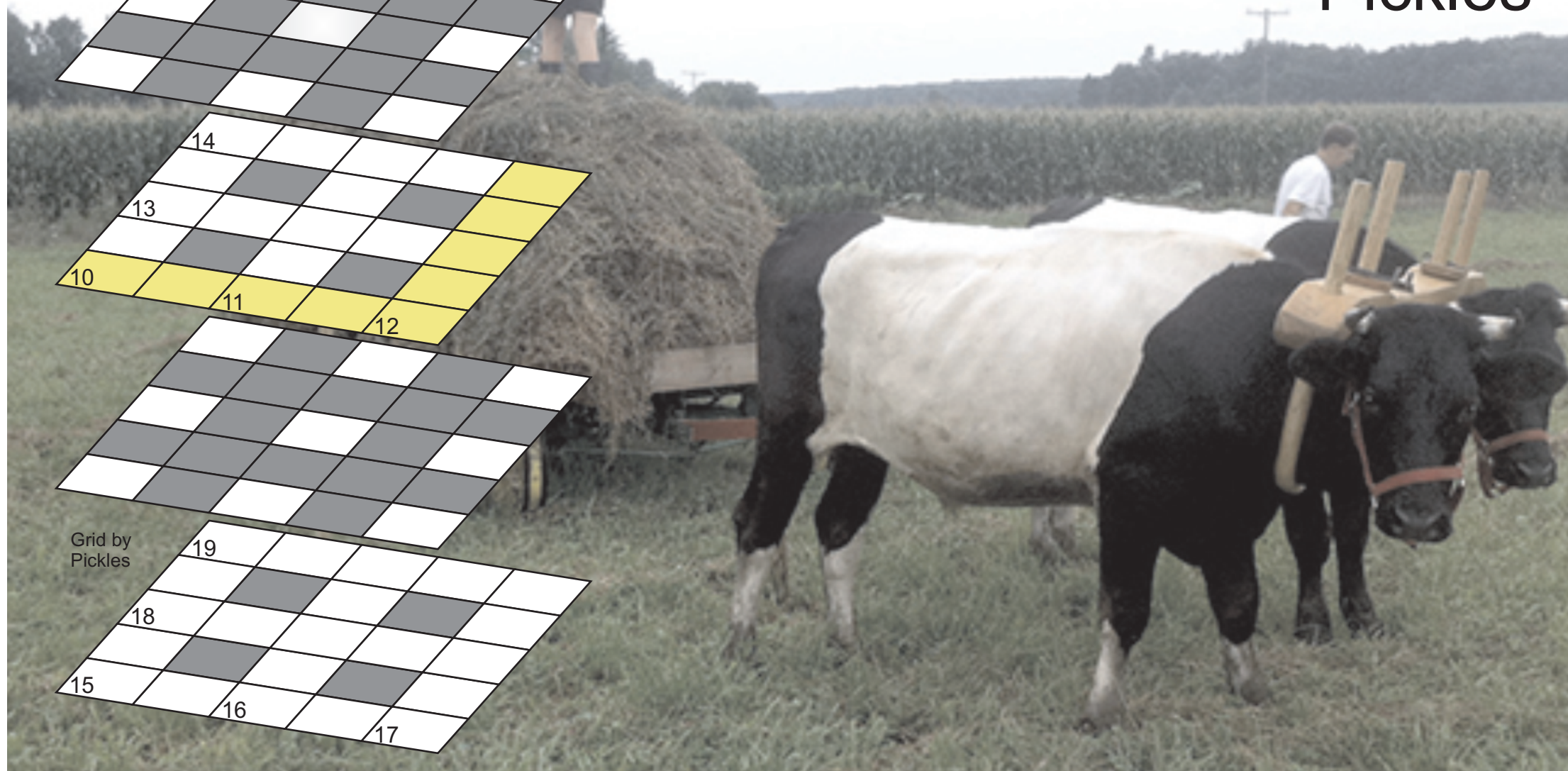
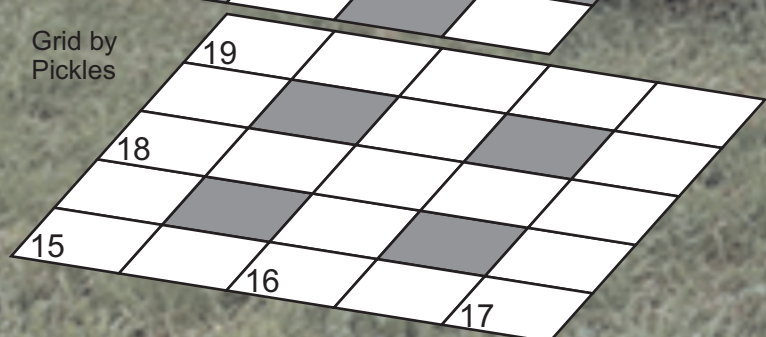
Some clues have incomplete wordplay.

Level Two might be inconclusive, but Level Four removes any doubt.

An anagram of green cells provides a theme creator (7,8).



Grid by
Pickles



MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
				1 _{18ac} Human nature's forgotten first-fruit?	2 _{5d} Hacker, US one?	3 _{3aw} Noise dubbed over unacceptable language in <i>Blue Peter</i> broadcast? Not true, silly!
4 _{3d} Dutch artist exhibited in vacant Bauhaus church	5 _{1aw} <i>Checkmate's</i> lead character has long memory	6 _{4ac} Beginning of <i>Cloud Busting</i> real, reveals sister	7 _{1ac} Chapter 50 of Malorie's first book came up among historians	8 _{1d} Carried on briefly with clubs and diamonds, holding no trumps	9 _{4d} Bone in cast, fractured	10 _{15ac} The extra dimension of wisdom and perceptiveness which makes these crosswords special!
11 _{15aw} No-win situations reflected in numerous war diaries	12 _{7ac} Repast oddly lacking at school? Finish your dinner!	13 _{6d} Surgical feat associated with knife-edge?	14 _{7d} Ways to get out of building site	15 _{17aw} I feel strong despite broken heart	16 _{14ac} Stories of happy innocence in US papers by surreptitious revolutionary	17 _{11aw} <i>Englishman in New York</i> has backing of record label in case of liability
18 _{10aw} Script of <i>Arabian Nights</i> originally on eastern parchment, unfinished	19 _{10ac} Lacking energy, sullen, meandering nonentities	20 _{2aw} Oscar-winning role in what seems like a moving picture?	21 _{2d} <i>Primula elatior</i> maybe, a rural item sadly disappearing?	22 _{16aw} Get stuck on one of Araucaria's nutty productions	23 _{9d} Tough question requires additional comment – let me think...	24 _{13ac} Originally Brazilian syncopated music and authentic dance
25 _{19ac} Earns bomb, hence not so stupid!	26 _{12aw} <i>Sun</i> harshly criticises <i>Double Cross</i> ?	27 _{8d} Rose's family tree excited Tony	28	29	30	31
32	33					Jun 2018

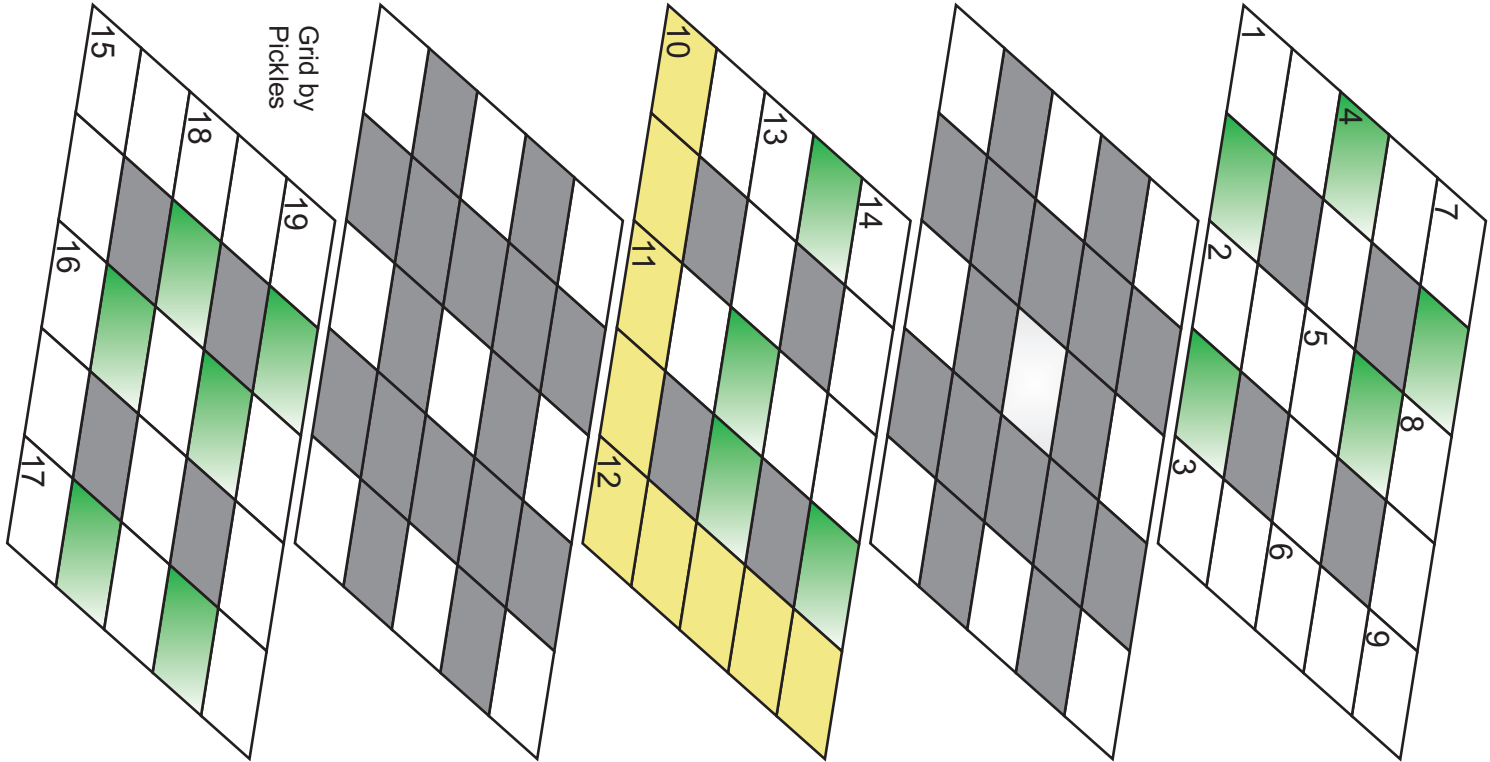
BBC CiNA 3D Crosswords

World Championship 2018

Directed Puzzle

Answer Grid - June Extra - Pickles

(Complete and return to enter competitions)



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