## 3D Crossword March 2019 Newsletter 3.1

Welcome to the March newsletter which includes:

1. Review of the February 3D Crossword
2. Funds raised by sales of Virtual Calendar 2019 and donations
3. March Extra 3D Crossword
4. Tie-break and RPM Trophy 2018 Results and Review

## 1. Review of the February 3D Crossword

December crossword set by Nutmeg, grid by Jolt.
The winner of this months puzzle is Stuart Presnell of Bristol.
The puzzle celebrates the 62nd anniversary of a work containing the perfectly formed nonsense $(9,5,5,5,9)$ to be found from the five asterisked clues in yellow highlights. Further asterisked clues are also thematic. The title of the work $(9,10)$ is an anagram of the green highlights in the grid. The mauve cells form an anagram of the creator $(4,7)$

Clues are presented in alphabetical order of their solution
I made a resolution this month not to use the internet until there were no options left. Frank's drawings hold their secrets so nothing obvious to work on so start solving. Interestingly the first two solved; the asterisked PARSE and PHRASE suggest grammar as a theme and that too solves along with LANGUAGE. We're on a roll. Eventually the yellow shaded clues are revealed and shuffle into COLORLESS GREEN IDEAS SLEEP FURIOUSLY which is, as per the rubrik, a perfectly formed nonsense. Resisting the internet the mauve cells eventually resolve into Noam Chomsky, which is confirmed by the 'creator' picture clue (Lynn got the Amy Winehouse bit). I cannot solve the 'book' anagram nor resolve Frank's 'book' picture clue so defeated I google (well I use ASK (Jeeves) as a preference) and all is resolved. Now the 'book' picture clue becomes clearer, although like a number of you, I too had trouble with the 'URES'. I echo a number of your comments, a very clever and nicely clued crossword. The background picture to the puzzle is a surrealist representation of Noam Chomsky's clever nonsense phrase.

I am hoping to interview Frank Paul this month and include an article in the April newsletter. I like the added test of the picture clues but do feel that they need to be tough so as not to reveal their secrets too early.


Syntactic Structures


Noam Chomsky


Dr. 'NO', followed by AMY Winehouse, containing 'CH' (for church) together with the city of 'OMSK'

| SOLUTION | Day | Direction, clue, letters | Explanation | Notes |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| AFFAIRS | 1 | 17ac Female introduced to safari aroused concerns (7) | F in safari* |  |
| ALCOPOP | 2 | 1ac Drink fizzy cola and explode (7) | cola* + pop |  |
| ATTIC | 3 | 12aw Spies retreating round dry part of building (5) | CIA reversed round TT |  |
| BRUTAL | 4 | 25up Ruthless fight for male domination during most of dance (6) | rut (as with deer) in bal(I) |  |
| CHAFFS | 5 | 2d Teases Charlie with very loud stomach? (6) | ff (fortissimo) in Chas |  |
| COLORLESS* | 6 | 2aw, 8ac-5 Wan <br> American officer taking off after his troops (9) | Col=officer + (less after OR), American refers to spelling | Part of Chomsky's famous example of a grammatically correct but meaningless sentence (N.B. original US spelling of 'colorful') |
| ECLAIR | 7 | 6d Girl's last to start iced cream cake (6) | Claire with e moved to start |  |
| ENLARGE | 8 | 5ac Increase general supply (7) | general $^{*}$ (with <br> suppleness) |  |
| ENLIST | 9 | 9d Sign on silent crackers? (6) | silent* |  |
| EYELID | 10 | $5 d$ A little batter in mug? <br> (6) | cryptic def, mug=face, ref batting an eyelid |  |
| FURIOUSLY* | 11 | 18aw, 23ac-5 Intensely inquisitive, scratching head when bitten by bug (9) | (c)urious in fly | Part of key sentence (see Day 6) |
| GRAMMAR* | 12 | 11ac Drive to and fro in pursuit of good 17 manual (7) | ram and ram rev after G |  |
| GREEN* | 13 | 11aw Naive participant in party (5) | 2 defs | Part of key sentence (see Day 6) |
| IDEAS* | 14 | 19aw Plans from Left abandoning principles (5) | ideals without $L$ | Part of key sentence (see Day 6) |

$\left.\begin{array}{|l|l|l|l|l|}\hline \text { ISRAELI } & 15 & \begin{array}{l}\text { 21ac Middle Eastern king } \\ \text { dramatically recalled in middle of } \\ \text { visit (7) }\end{array} & \begin{array}{l}\text { reversal of Lear } \\ \text { (dramatic king) in } \\ \text { (v)isi(t) }\end{array} & \begin{array}{l}\text { Thematic } \\ \text { connection } \\ \text { Chomsky being } \\ \text { highly critical of }\end{array} \\ \hline \text { Israeli government } \\ \text { and military }\end{array}\right\}$

## February Puzzle Comments from Solvers

Too many hints in the rubric but good theme. I hour 30 min including a short nap ML
Loved the 'Amy' "Omsk' picture clue RE
I'd never heard of this book or the author so this was virgin territory for me. Fascinating! I see the book is still available on Amazon JJ

As every accountant hails on 1 February, "Thank goodness that's over for another year" KW
I was pleasantly surprised to discover that my linguistics degree from 1971 is still of use today! DE
Who would have believed it MM
A somewhat obscure theme (for me at least) but it has added another arrow to my quiver of general knowledge. As usual a lovely set of clues from Nutmeg EL

Brilliant puzzle with a theme thats surely never been used before JM
I enjoy working out the puzzle in Frank Paul's drawings BB
Good challenge. I used to read Noam Chomsky articles in either the Guardian or Observer but have never heard of references herein so had to complete the grid and then work out. AG

Clever puzzle with great clueing. JP
I think that this would have been almost as hard to compile as it was to solve. HB
Really enjoyed this one - very unusual! JT
Good heavens! This exercised my brain! Once I got the theme it wasn't too bad but it was certainly a challenge! DS

I passed it on to my son, who lectures in linguistics, but, although he very quickly figured out the work, creator and nonsense, he sadly still shows no interest in cryptic crosswords. Where have I gone wrong? DW

It was a very enjoyable solve as usual and many thanks to Nutmeg and Jolt, also to Frank Paul for his rebus-style drawings. I have recently acquired a copy of the Cryptic Pub Quiz book and am enjoying more of his drawings there. My favourite clue was Day 10 EYELID when 'batter' and 'mug' threw me right off the track for a while. JB

Superb example of developing theme and clever grid construction. (I liked the coincidental bonus of 'uh-oh' in row 10 - a phrase i often utter to my self when tackling cryptics) ML-J

Loved this. A very clever puzzle and had great fun with it JA
At long last, a puzzle with some intellectual gravitas. Unfortunately, I could not, in the time available find my well-thumbed copy of the Real Idiot's Guide to Chomsky (Penguin Random House) so can only draw one sure conclusion, namely:- Colorless Green Nutmegs Jolt Furiously . Thank you both for a terrific puzzle! GS

A really nice puzzle, just the right level for me GB

Plenty of nonsense to investigate here. I have spent far too long reading Wikipedia pages on Chomsky's ideas. We will all be able to write better nonsense in future after this AJR

Not too tricky apart from the visual clues. MJ
One of us spotted the theme almost at once, the other had to solve the anagrams. Thanks for the intellectual fun. N\&SI

I guess like many I know of the author but not of his works. The 'tactics' helped solve the title anagram - not clear about the 'URES' part. PAITA and SPINTO new to me, rest of the clues gradually fell into place. Favourite clue 31 SPICY DM

Very enjoyable. Plenty more perfectly formed nonsense to be heard these days. AC
Here's my solution of this month's puzzle - once I found a few of the words in the thematic sentence, the author soon came to mind, but I needed to google for the title of the work. Frank Paul's drawings helped to confirm the title, though I don't see how the four faces give the final "ures", and l've not found the anagram of the author's name that the other drawings give. (By the way, I don't suppose Frank could be related to the great SF artist - Frank R Paul ?) PM ('Ill be following up with Frank this month in an interview for the April Newsletter editor)

A novel theme. Not a book I had come across before. Another enjoyable crossword. MP
Herewith my solution to February's excellent puzzle by Nutmeg. Knowing about Chomsky a little, and remembering the sentence from a Linguistics course I took at University, this fell into place nicely for me -- and I even managed to finish it before I read Adam's hints, which I usually need to get me started! This month's imagery is not a little frightening and surreal.... but then the idea of nonsense that also works perfectly well syntactically is exactly what Surrealism is all about. MS

Please find appended my stab at February's challenge. Once again my knowledge has been extended thereby, in that I had never heard of Noam Chomsky and his Syntactic Structures! Nevertheless I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the challenge, and look forward to further similar experiences throughout this coming year. SF

## 2. Funds raised by sales of Virtual Calendar 2019 and donations

Monies received from donations and sales of the virtual calendar 2019 total £1317. We have sent cheques for £607 each to BBC CiNA and to RNIB for the Book Share Program. We will send a further $£ 51.50$ to each charity. We await acknowledgement in written form. Eric Westbrook

## 3. March Extra 3D Crossword

A March Extra crossword, clued by Puck, will be posted on the website at the end of March with a deadline for the end of April.

## 3. Tie-break and RPM Trophy 2018 Results and Review

This year's competition has produced another rich harvest of creative ideas along with the energy to realise them in very useable grids. Our school of 3D
crossword designers continues to grow. New designers last year have returned with a heightened sense of adventure. Such experiments are to be encouraged. There may be the occasional crash but as Dick Van Dyke once said: 'from the ashes of disaster grow the roses of success'. Followers of England \& Wales cricket will remember Edgbaston 2005.

I am most grateful for all the efforts put in. Our new crossword editor will enjoy selecting and enhancing suitable grids for the 2020 series. Several grids clearly benefit from hours of fiddling and jiggling thematic solutions around obstinate grids, honing and polishing until they sparkle. Sirius has wandered around them for weeks, drawing out all the grids and constructing word tables ready to send to the setters for clue writing (if chosen). The conventions are followed more closely now and there are more word lists which can be used without further editing.

Thank you everyone for not only getting through the marathon of the 3D year but then to engage so wholeheartedly in the design of your grid. There is much to celebrate.

I was delighted to receive grids from project members who counted themselves out of the Championship competition by virtue of their close involvement with the puzzles. They have wanted to invest further by supporting the Ray Parry-Morris Trophy Competition for the best grid. I know Ray would be absolutely thrilled to see the designs. His creativity has sparked others who in turn have provided stimulus for more exciting designs. Thank you Ray.

The Ray Parry-Morris Trophy for best 3D Grid Design goes to Keith Williams of Winchester. Second place, separated by the thinnest of slivers was Ben Lovering of Southsea.

The new BBC Children in Need Appeal Crossword World Champions are Nick and Sarah Inglis of York. Second place was awarded to Garry Strippling of Paris

My huge thanks to Shirley and Charles for judging the clues and to everyone taking part for making this such an excellent competition that moves the project forward.

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## Detailed Review of the Competition Entries

In all cases the grid designs are judged by Sirius and the clues by Shirley and Charles Curran

| 04 Apr | This 7x5x5 grid with 37 solutions, <br> NB <br> shows 44\% thematic content which is <br> good for a large grid and includes two <br> long running snakes, one of which is so <br> delightful that it caused me to burst out <br> laughing. That is rare in a grid! |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  | The theme is well chosen and a nice <br> twist on the anniversary noted. It will <br> not require research. The designer has <br> thought through the puzzle structure <br> and also provided clues. I particularly <br> enjoyed BELOVED. (Not part of the <br> marking except where it influences the <br> grid design). |  |
| Directions are accurate. Conventions <br> are not always followed. |  |  |
| Reversals and snakes are employed <br> with facility by the experienced <br> designer - great weaving. There are <br> three bars and two less well-known <br> words. | This is another very useable grid from <br> an experienced designer with <br> characteristic humour. | Highly commended |


| $05 \text { May }$ GS | Following the exemplar closely, this clearly presented, complex $9 \times 7 \times 5$ grid with 47 solutions shows $56 \%$ thematic cells which is very good for such a large grid. GIN raises an issue in having used a different method of calculation. The convention continued in the marking here only counts a cell once even though three themed solutions may have used it. I have applied the same standard across all grids, but I note GIN's implied point which we will review. <br> The theme is well chosen, and the grid shows some associated humour. It might require a little bit of research to complete but this will not be excessive. <br> What wonderful weaving. Snakes, reversals blends, are all used to good effect. Several daisy chains prevent bars though this is less of a problem in a large grid. An outrageous phrase that snakes through the diagram, is a triumph. It is unconventional but not to be clued and funny. <br> I see no bars. Perhaps one less wellknown word. That takes some doing. <br> The designer has given much thought to how the puzzle can be set and has given puzzle preamble. All directions correct, conventions followed except in a very minor way (space after comma). <br> It is very pleasing to see GIN's progress in becoming a master grid designer. <br> This will make a super puzzle. <br> Very Highly Commended <br> 2nd Place 3D Crossword World Championships (SILVER) |
| :---: | :---: |

OUIJA 'Foreign agreements across the board' (5)
Explanation:
oui + ja = Ouija Board
Highly commended: This clue is succinct and effective. Any setter would be proud of a five-word clue that has a cryptic definition and two successful words of wordplay whilst maintaining a plausible surface reading. It might benefit from a final question mark since 'across the board' hints at but doesn't precisely define the nounal OUIJA board.

## HC

Championships (SILVER)

| 06 Jun JT | Following the exemplar closely, the beautiful and immaculate presentation of this $7 \times 5 \times 6$ grid with 34 solutions, shows a thematic percentage of cells of $53 \%$, which is good for this size of grid. Blank cells are coloured in layers, in keeping with the theme, which might need to be researched very briefly. <br> Directions are substantially correct with just a few errors due to one misplaced cell number. <br> There is skillful, intricate weaving with several blends and snakes. Grid entries are single words with no phrases. There are no bars and perhaps just one less well-known word. <br> This will make a lovely puzzle. <br> Highly Commended | RAINBOW 'Top quality brown mixture has every colour in it ${ }^{\text {( }}$ (7) <br> Explanation: (AI + BROWN)* HC <br> Highly commended: A fine clue that produces a smile. The solver is initially perplexed, wondering how a brown mixture can contain all the colours but then the anagram word surfaces. The clue is succinct and has a coherent surface reading. AI for 'top quality' is rather a crossword cliché but we all need and use it so the clue is none the worse for that |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\begin{aligned} & 12 \mathrm{Dec} \\ & \mathrm{~N} \& S I \end{aligned}$ | This is a clearly presented $7 \times 5 \times 7$ grid with 47 solutions that will fit a standard calendar puzzle template with some small adjustments. Thematic percentage is $57 \%$ by the cell count method and is very good for this size of grid. <br> The theme is well chosen and solvers may enjoy refreshing memories. <br> There are no bars, as a result, the designers point out, of several arches including short words and abbreviation. <br> Directions are accurate. <br> Great 3D weaving using reversals, snakes, blends. Healthy number of cells in the intervening layers are used in thematic solutions. This is real three-dimensional design with a great variety of word and phrase lengths. <br> Very highly Commended <br> World Championship Winners (GOLD) | LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN <br> 'Eve wouldn't be having disorderly deaf barman' $(6,3,9)$ <br> Explanation: <br> Explanation: anagram (DISORDERLY) of EVE WOULDN'T BE HAVING somewhat cryptic definition: DEAF BARMAN <br> VHC* <br> Very, very highly commended: Wow! A fabulous clue. There is a stroke of genius in this. The anagram word links the superb definition (with the play on 'barman') to the convincing anagram fodder. To be able to clue 18 letters, and such difficult ones too (the Vs Ws and $B$ ) in a mere 7 words with no redundant material is stunning. The surface reading is amusing too - we can picture that bolshie unresponsive fellow serving in the pub. Delightful! |


| 05 May |  |  |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| BL | This is a beautifully constructed $7 \times 5 \times 5$ grid of 33 solutions, <br> which undergoes a transformation after being completed in <br> the first round. The transformation involves two seven letter <br> words morphing into another pair of real words revealing the <br> theme whilst maintaining directions. Fabulous! | NA (RPM) |
|  | The thematic percentage of cells is $50 \%$ which includes a <br> wonderful thematic snake. The designer shows great skill in <br> juggling the grid to allow such severe restraints. Furthermore, <br> solutions of some clues provide solutions which are cryptic <br> clues in themselves and are part of the theme. This shows <br> great creativity and stunning design skills. |  |
|  | The theme is well chosen, and many solvers will enjoy <br> listening again in their bit of research. |  |
|  | The presentation is immaculate as usual. <br> Directions are accurate. All words are in Chambers with <br> perhaps two less well-known words. | There are no bars and no snakes except for the very <br> deliberate and thematic sidewinder of a snake referred to <br> above. |
| The designer has thought through the entire puzzle which is <br> supported by the grid design. <br> This will make a delicious multi-level puzzle. This is a <br> masterpiece from a most creative master designer. | Very highly commended with a wow! <br> VHC* | Second place RPM Trophy |


| $\begin{aligned} & 00 \text { Any } \\ & \text { PD } \end{aligned}$ | This $7 \times 5 \times 5$ clearly presented grid (larger than last year) comes with an exemplary word list with notes on some thematic words and names that will be useful for the clue writer. The theme will interest solvers and may well broaden our reading. <br> The percentage of thematic content is good at $44 \%$ and could easily be boosted by finding an anagram of a theme word. <br> Directions are basically sound with one or two slips. Conventions are followed. <br> There is excellent weaving in horizontal layers, less so in vertical planes. Reversals, blends and snakes are employed with skill. Grid entries are single words. Phrases might be considered for next year? <br> Sometimes a set of theme words just does not want to mesh together! The grid has 10 bars which is on the high side. Three bars are in a $4: 3$ split and do not affect the 3D quality, but seven bars are in 4:1 Or 6:1 splits which reduce 3D quality. It could be that a different style grid might work better. <br> Nevertheless, this is a very useable grid and will make a ripping good puzzle! <br> Commended | AUBREY <br> 'In a daub Reynolds painted this character' (6) <br> Explanation: <br> Hidden <br> In a dAUB REYnolds painted this character <br> HC <br> Highly commended: One hidden clue is always allowed in a crossword and usually welcomed by solvers. The setter has chosen a difficult word to clue and manages to make the solver wonder about characters he might have encountered in a Reynolds portrait (poor Reynolds, he might not have appreciated having his masterpiece called a 'daub'). We need a word prompting us to look for the hidden word (as well as the 'in') and I am not sure that 'painted' works. Maybe 'revealed', 'reveals', 'contained' or 'produced'. A seven-word clue is nicely succinct and the surface reading is good. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |

This beautifully drawn $7 \times 5 \times 7$ submission with 47 solutions, is positively crackling with ideas and innovations. A great deal of thought and hard work has gone into this design. It really is wonderful.

The designer shows much skill and opportunism to fill the grid providing correct and sometimes complex directions. Much thought has been given to various aspects of the theme and how these might be reflected in the design. The grid shows strong empathy and makes a point or two.

The new ideas behind some of the features seen here for the first time will be in general use before too long. Grid patterns reflect those employed by the themed hero/heroine. The whole grid appears as a well know institution when it finally dawns on one. Epiphany is encouraged by the appearance of a rooftop feature during solution.

The submission presents problems because of the use of unconventional non-dictionary entries.

As a super-solver, the designer will have romped through hundreds, thousands perhaps, of crosswords set by compilers and edited by crossword editors to a generally agreed set of conventions. The rules are there, but we are not necessarily aware of them as solvers.

The convention for solutions to clues in a crossword grid should be capable of precise definition and have a dictionary reference. Phrases should be wellknown with recognized sources. A plausible combination of acceptable words does not necessarily produce an acceptable phrase for a crossword.

It is not possible to compare the impressive thematic percentage here with those in other grids that follow the rules.

I think the designer is a future world champion and hope to see more designs in the future. The rules are easy to learn and follow (once you know they are there!).

But creativity like that shown here is gold dust.
This is an entry of special merit

## 38ac NIGHT IN

‘Close with money: no evening out!' $(5,2)$

Explanation: NIGH + TIN

## VHC

Very highly commended: This is such a clever clue, splitting the two words NIGHT IN differently and producing a completely different sense that complements the meaning of the other part of the clue. There is superb economy here and a splendid surface reading of perhaps a rather miserly husband refusing to take his wife out for a fine dinner and night at the theatre. (Am I being sexist maybe she's the tight-fisted one.) A lovely clue.

| $\begin{aligned} & 03 \mathrm{Mar} \\ & \mathrm{MJ} \end{aligned}$ | This beautifully presented $7 \times 5 \times 7$ grid (with shading this year!) of 39 solutions is based on a well chosen theme that will be known but require a little research to complete. The thematic percentage of cells is $44 \%$ by my calculation which is very respectable for this size of grid. NonChambers dictionary references are given. <br> Accurate directions following conventions (but still need editing for spaces). Just one slip. <br> The designer shows good construction skills Weaving includes reversals, blends, chains and snakes, particularly in 'across' and 'away' directions. This keeps the number of bars down and allows words of different lengths to be accommodated. The six bars are not marked. Perhaps just one less well-known word. <br> I am most grateful for all the thought, effort and time put into this. Much has been achieved and this has the makings of an excellent submission. I wonder if the designer having set sights high, having invested a lot of time, simply ran out of the commodity hitting problems that defied resolution.?? <br> The submission is very useable and with a bit of finishing off, it will make a good puzzle. <br> Highly Commended | SHELF <br> 'Put aside rotten flesh' <br> (5) Explanation: (FLESH)* <br> HC <br> Highly commended: I was rather surprised that Chambers accepts the verbal sense of 'shelf' as the same as 'shelve'. That will be a challenge to solvers but fair enough. The anagram indicator and the relatively easy anagram will send the solver to his dictionary to confirm that, so the clue works, is beautifully economical and has an evocative surface reading |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |


| $\begin{aligned} & 00 \text { Any } \\ & \text { ML } \end{aligned}$ | This $7 \times 5 \times 5$ grid of 37 solutions is a substantial piece of work in progress based on a great bit of lateral thinking, that promises a great deal. Presentation is crystal-clear. The designer is skilled in using reversals, arches and snakes, achieving a thematic percentage of cells of $50 \%$ which is good for this size of grid. There is excellent weaving particularly in horizontal layers, less so in the vertical planes. <br> The impressive number of themed words come at the expense of very short words to provide Polyfilla for the grid completion. <br> Directions are very good with just an occasional error. Some convention details concerning hyphens not followed. Extra spaces used. <br> Bars are not shown. There may be 11 bars. This is on the high side. The bottom level is quite isolated. A 4:3 split in a line of seven cells is not so much of a problem. But there are perhaps too many 6:1's and levels become detached. <br> I have the impression of an unfinished symphony. I think the designer may have hit a problem and ran out of time. This has the potential to become a cracking puzzle but there is quite a bit more work to do. <br> If the above sounds on the critical side, it's because I see the designer as a future Champion. And I would love this design idea brought to fruition with a gloss finish! <br> Commended | OBOE: <br> 'Played by Irish Alfie?' Explanation: <br> O + BOE (Eastenders) <br> C <br> Commended: I am not sure that I understand how the $O$ in this clue works. Is the setter referring to the abbreviation 'over' in the sense that it is over when it has been 'played'? There would be a double leap there. Solvers who are not Eastenders aficionados would be able to find 'Alfie' Boe on the Internet - do we then assume that the O' indicates the Irishness - quite original? We then find the instrument and the clue is nicely economical with the necessary question mark since the definition is cryptic. |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |

## PSEPHOLOGY

'The study of a combination of hanging chads, rogueless GOP, yes, and endless poll' (10)
Explanation: Anag CHADS (-CAD) + GOP + YES + POL

## C

Commended: A difficult word (I had to look it up) and certainly a most challenging word to clue. I am not sure which of the definitions of CHADS the setter requires as none of them really fit with the required surface reading (but am I out of date - is this a modern form of CHAV?). The deceptive comma before rogueless is not really acceptable crossword grammar and a separator word is needed to subtract CAD from CHADS (since the letters C and AD come out as two parts). 'a combination of' must be assumed to be the anagram indicator - it is mildly unorthodox, but the ' $\mathrm{POL}(1)$ ' gives the solver a hint. Most editors like a clue to be a maximum of six words or so long and the 14 words here would, I am afraid, earn the red pen but although I think this ambitious clue has flaws, it deserves to be commended.

00 Any
This brave foray into the world of Seven Dials Grids with 49 solutions, is neatly and clearly presented, achieving a thematic percentage of $54 \%$. This includes 8 solutions of the thematic category plus the category itself clued by 3 solutions in a dial. Directions correct with some minor deviations from convention. The grid is finely weaved by the experienced and skillful designer. I love the way one of the long phrases (17) is accommodated. All words are in Chambers and none judged as obscure.

There are more bars in the seventh dial than shown it seems. A minor distractor. The bars do not affect the 3D quality unduly. Dial seven is a little bit separate, the designer choosing a six-letter spine to the diagram, but it is rich in thematic material.

This will make a super puzzle. Most solvers will enjoy the theme. The experienced designer has thought about how to fit 49 solutions into a puzzle calendar slot, suggesting the 8 members of the category might not be clued.

## Very Highly Commended

The apparent simplicity of the $5 \times 5 \times 5$ grid $0 f 27$ grid entries in a crystal-clear presentation, masks the kind of grid juggling that would have RPM tidying sock drawers over a long period. Twenty-five seven letter words are clues. The solutions undergo a thematic transformation then being entered as five letter words. All seven and five letter words are real. This is fiendishly difficult to achieve.

The master grid designer achieves a 100\% thematic percentage of cells.

Presentation is crystal clear as usual. Solutions benefit from being ac, aw, or d only. There are no reversals, blends or sbakes. All words are in Chambers.

The word list table in Word is perfect and immediately useable. Given the complexity of juggling to achieve the beautiful simplicity, there are surprisingly few obscure words. Perhaps three less well-known words.

This is a triumph, a masterpiece from a master that takes the breath away.

## Very Highly Commended and WOW! VHC* <br> RPM Trophy 2018 Winner

NA (RPM)

Regretably we cannot print the clue; it reveals too much about the crossword theme for when we see it next year.

Commended: There is a fine surface reading here. The solver imagines openers from some overseas team being dazzled by Lords. The setter has avoided the cliché of 'the French' to produce the LE and his clue is better for it (I don't think the French are cricket aces). Five words make for a fine, economical clue. There is a minor problem of crossword grammar since in the definition part of the clue, we are using the Lords in its cricket sense but the construction in the wordplay requires the lords = PEERS sense and the necessary verb becomes 'enthral'. This is one of the very challenging problems of setting. I think it is stretching a point to expect the solver to go from 'openers' to PEELERS' but the well-placed question mark comes into effect for that.

## Summary of Overall Results

|  | Theme \& Grid | Clue |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 04 Apr NB | HC | NA (RPM) |
| 05 May GS | VHC <br> 2nd World Championship | HC |
| 06 Jun JT | HC | HC |
| $12 \mathrm{Dec} N$ \& SI | VHC <br> World Championship Winners | VHC <br> World Championship Winners |
| 05 May BL | $\begin{aligned} & \text { VHC* } \\ & \text { 2 }^{\text {nd }} \text { RPM Trophy } \end{aligned}$ | NA (RPM) |
| 00 Any PD | C | HC |
| 05 May AC | An entry of special merit | VHC |
| 03 Mar MJ | HC | HC |
| 00 Any ML | C | C |
| 00 ?? JN | VHC <br> 3rd 3D World Championship | C |
| 00 Any AG | VHC | NA (RPM) |
| 09 Sep KW | VHC* <br> RPM Trophy Winner | C |


[^0]:    Eric Westbrook

