

AZED CROSSWORD 2630

PERDU

1 J. Grimes: Introduction to Playfair with regular pairs from clue word encrypted – I'm hopelessly lost (*P + anag. of ue, rd*).

2 T. J. Moorey: Nancy's lost and outrageously rude Trump's back? (*anag. incl. p; ref. N. Pelosi*).

3 P. W. Marlow: Leaders of Europe reinforce Ukraine dubbing Putin deranged and reckless (*anag. of first letters*).

VHC

D. & N. Aspland: Dupré's playing is out of sight (*ref. Marcel D., organist*).

M. Barley: On desperate venture, past-it MP goes AWOL in a hovel (*per du(MP); ref. M. Hancock in the jungle*).

C. J. Brougham: Person fooling on a cycle is reckless (*cf. duper*).

W. Drever: The Queen died, laid to rest in place largely hidden from view (*ER d in pu(t)*).

H. Freeman: Thus leper during quarantine? (*hidden & lit.*).

R. J. Heald: Out of sight clue ends in surprise Azed Cup winner: you! (*anag. of last letters; clue²*).

P. F. Henderson (New Zealand): This fails to be wrong for 'despairful'? (*comp. anag. & lit.*).

D. F. Manley: A duke releasing book *Spare* ultimately seen as reckless? (*per + du(ke); ref. Prince Harry*).

R. Pinnock: Reckless under pressure, furious Braverman finally being dismissed (*anag. incl. P less n*).

Dr S. J. Shaw: I'm concealed during sniper duty (*hidden & lit.*).

P. A. Stephenson: He's concealed in sniper duties (*hidden & lit.*).

J. Vincent & Ms R. Porter: Initially, diabolical 'Playfair' remained undecipherable – everything, unfortunately, being impossible to make out! (*anag. of first letters*).

Mrs A. M. Walden: Obscure European rule divides furious DUP (*E, r in anag.*).

A. J. Wardrop: A leader casts a vote in secret (*per du(x)*).

D. Whisstock (Italy): Old soldier on mission, concealed and involved in sniper duty (*double def.; hidden*).

A. Whittaker: Broken up, with dear one gone and lost to view (*anag. less a*).

HC

D. Appleton, T. Blakeson, Ms K. Bolton, T. C. Borland, J. M. Brown, Ms S. Brown, Dr J. Burscough, C. A. Clarke, T. Clement, M. Coates, Dr I. S. Fletcher, G. I. L. Grafton, J. Hood, J. C. Leyland, A. MacDougall, P. McKenna, Rev. Prebendary M. R. Metcalf, C. G. Millin, J. Pearce, D. Price Jones, W. Ransome, Dr J. B. Reid, A. D. Scott, I. Simpson, P. L. Stone, R. C. Teuton, A. J. Varney, Ms S. Wallace, M. Whitmore.

Comments

111 entries, with no discernible mistakes, though I couldn't swear that all the encoded entries were entered correctly. Although one regular remarked blithely that he found the puzzle easier than usual, it was clear that most found it a brute and this clearly accounted for the low entry. The main stumbling block was working out the code word, which I hadn't anticipated. The fact that it was an unusually long word didn't help, especially with X and Y not appearing in the bottom line of the word square. In the past I've often asked you to clue this word, but this time I thought the task would be specially tricky, and sure enough many of you said how relieved they were that I hadn't gone for this. I often look for unusually long code words, for no special reason, and I may even have used AMBIDEXTROUSLY before. As I may have mentioned before, Ximenes wickedly chose CAB many years ago! To give you a bit of extra help, I gave you more encoded entries than usual this time, but this doesn't seem to have had much effect. The fact remains that Playfair is popular with many of you, though there is a minority who dislike the challenge of working out the word square, which has nothing to do with solving clues. There apparently exists a 'Playfair breaker' on the Internet under the pseudonym Quinapalus, but this was spurned by some who preferred to tackle the challenge unaided.

Twelve of my clues were chosen as favourites, with 'Rib involved outlay for Adam, without restraint' (COSTA) and 'Lives with right leg in chains' (IRONS) coming equal first. When it came to my task of judging your efforts, it helped that, for a relatively obscure word, PERDU offered an unusually wide range of meanings, which you took full advantage of. I'm just sorry the puzzle proved so much more difficult than usual.

A belated apology to finish with. In the slip for RIBALD (No. 2,621 I carelessly omitted Tim Moorey's VHC: 'With no end of mockery, lady comic getting near the bone? (*rib* + *anag. less y*, & *lit.*; *ref. e.g. Jo Brand*)'.