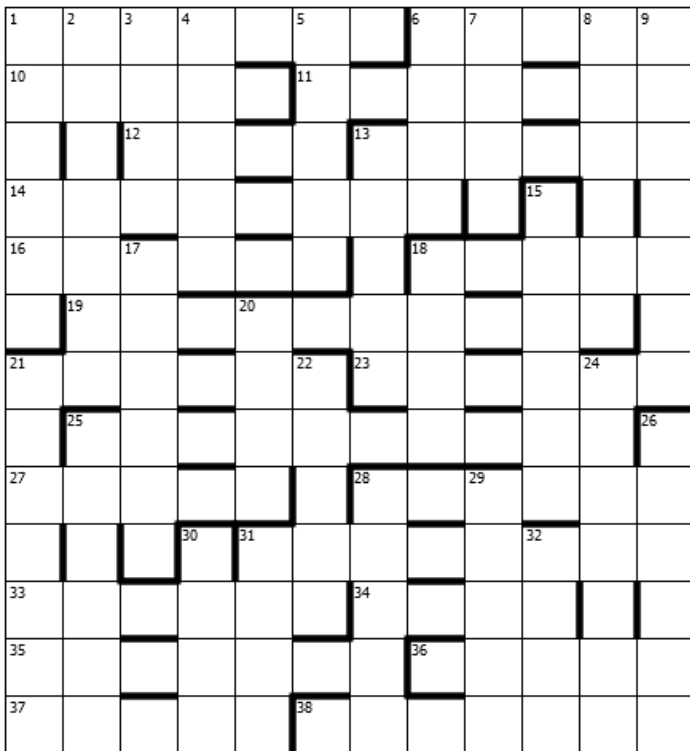


Side by Side by eXternal



Each row, with one exception, contains two letters omitted by wordplay in their clues. Cells containing these letters always occur in pairs, horizontally or vertically. These letters spell out a pair linked by a title spelled out in clue order by pairs of consecutive letters to be removed from eight other down clues before solving, always leaving real words. Finally, solvers must change one entry to show a further title linking the pair, creating new real-word crossing entries.

Across

- 1 Female slave is following old boy around (7)
- 6 Pierre's article on middle of your work unit (5)
- 10 Like thread of fiction involving knight (5)
- 11 Unknown one returned claw of prehistoric times (7)
- 12 A love for indigo (4)
- 13 Errant first daughter lives aimlessly (6)
- 14 Once determined when well directed (8)
- 16 River swimmer systematically crosses (6)
- 18 Express contempt about vacuous EastEnders retrospective (5)
- 19 Islander at urinal's a drunk (10)
- 21 Peers in Ayrshire pigpens (6)
- 23 That's foul, rear of obscene yokel's itched (6)
- 25 Trump and English rogue not related (10)
- 27 Cockney has confidence and begins (5)
- 28 Revolutionary is turning more malicious (6)
- 31 Opposing another player alone, no netballer tackles (8)
- 33 Forming into circle, soldiers stand in wine cellar (6)
- 34 A guide regularly used for Swiss canton (4)
- 35 Strange item on Canadian rider (7)
- 36 No longer adjudge money not British (5)
- 37 Heartless wombat took apart caterpillar (5)
- 38 An earl too diminished becomes tougher (7)

Down

- 1 Band of light encircling head of most elevated learned man (6)
- 2 Deserted, is swallow to move from perch? (7)
- 3 Guests in land wash collections of possessions (4)
- 4 Transparent material covering over fabrics (5)
- 5 Tricky to hide large excursion (5)
- 6 Rodent removing wings of feathered beasts (4)
- 7 Month encasing this mixture could make pillar (4)
- 8 Behold! Thug's leaped on layer made of wooden strips (6)
- 9 Base carer raising son is guaranteed (7)
- 13 Long-forgotten disorder in Midlands city that's had fourth upgrade? (5)
- 15 Reached highest point looking sickly (6)
- 17 Rancid ragged undies not completely destroyed (6)
- 18 Slight luminance on Alsatian coats (4)
- 20 Lifted special metal sieve for local person (4)
- 21 Costly clumsily crossing old mother's blind spot (7)
- 22 Stretch ancient clasp (5)
- 24 Study dissecting slow climbing of sloths, maybe (7)
- 25 Mature women supporting forum group (6)
- 26 Studies mountain nymphs (6)
- 28 Number of close encounters (5)
- 29 That is interrupted by upcoming race season (5)
- 30 Lubricant's cool temperature (4)
- 31 Tory place above joint oddly overlooked by tax officer (4)
- 32 Ancient buildings erode, appearing hideous (4)