

Summary

- 1. January Competition
- 2. Clues & Explanations
- 3. Acknowledgements £4000 BBC CiNA RNIB
- 4. February Deadline 28th!

Thank you from the team for all the good wishes and from those anticipating another cracking year. There were some terrific, horrific puns amongst the very positive feedback. And how wonderful it is to receive entries from solvers new to the 3D format who have found the courage and confidence to tackle something quite different,(there should be a badge for this) and then take the time to provide feedback on the experience. This is very much appreciated. Feedback guides the project.

We hope to continue to acknowledge competition entries in spite of most pleasingly increased numbers. If you remain puzzled by a clue or two, you will find clue explanations from Arachne later in the newsletter. This is an excellent way to hone solving skills.

Another source of inspiration is the excellent series of Hints & Tips by Adam Saille. Email sirius@calendarpuzzles.co.uk to join the circulation list.

1. January Competition

The January competition with Frankenstein/monster' themed grid by Gin and clued by Arachne, was won by Heather Knowles and Chris Cooper of Leamington Spa. Excellent solving!

Feedback included:Happy New Year! A great start. RE
A Happy New Year to you all. HB

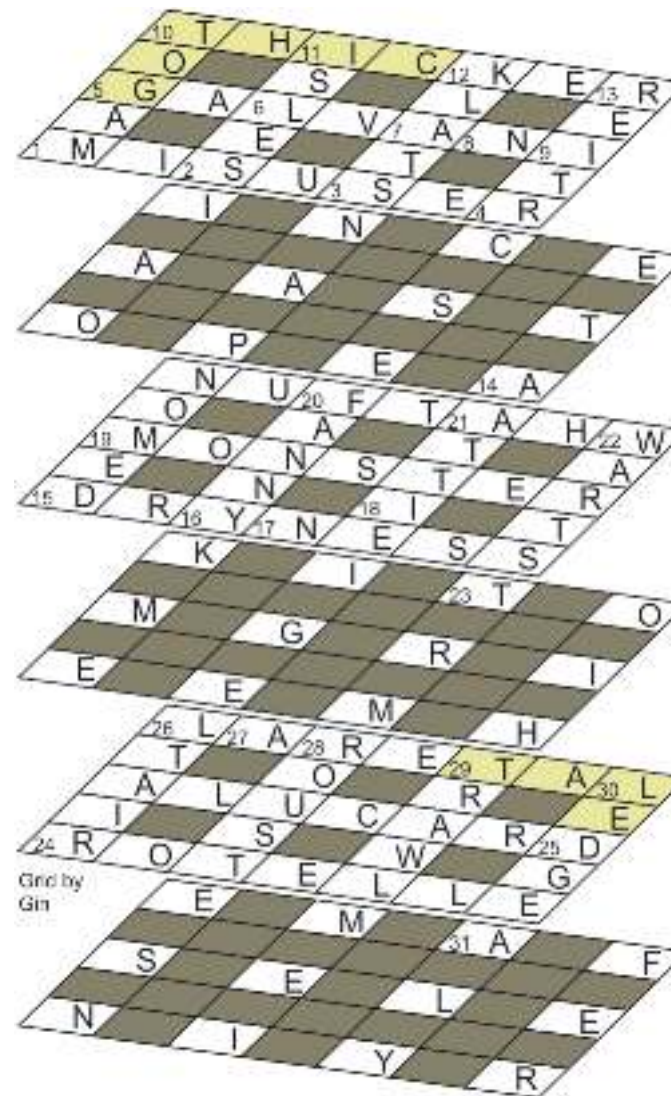
We found the little anagrammed end game amusing and original S&CC
We enjoyed hunting for the four extra words to anagram. Great fun, and a nice clincher K&REB

Many thanks for the interesting details in the calendar and I hope you are well and having a good year so far.

I attach my entry for the January 3D puzzle. I realise now that I am going to get a lot of enjoyment from this calendar - worth much more than the money I paid for it. If it is possible I would be happy to make a small Standing Order donation monthly for the support of things like the RNIB Pears Centre - maybe towards the construction of something similar in 'the provinces'?



January 2018 Arachne Gin



This puzzle notes the 200th anniversary of the publication of Frankenstein by Mary Shelley, January 1818.

Anagram of **FRANKENSTEIN MARY SHELLEY** is provided by **20to FANNY**, **4d RASHER**, **3d SEEMLY**, **10d TINKLE B)** Yellow highlights reveal **GOTHIC TALE**

My wife, who works with adults with learning disabilities and/or a variety of conditions (though none is visually impaired) recognised the kind of sensory environment depicted. She has sometimes had to accompany a service user to a no doubt smaller one of these places in Braintree, Essex, and she loved it!

Thank you once again, I shall try to discipline myself not to start Vlad/Bozzy until February. AC

Very enjoyable. Thanks to Arachne, Gin and all contributors to the production of the crossword.

I have really liked January and February, and am now having to restrain myself from attempting March. Thanks for the fun! JA

I have had a go at the first puzzle and thoroughly enjoyed it. So here it is! SW

Great start to 2018. Thank you! JJ

Many thanks again for your crosswords. It's nice to be back on board after a year away from crosswords.

Here in Geneva we celebrated the 200th anniversary of Frankenstein in 2016 as the idea of the book was conceived in Mary Godwin (future Shelley)'s mind during a rainy summer in Cologne with her future husband Percy, Lord Byron and John Polidori in 1816.

We now have a statue of Frankenstein's monster looking very lonely on a so-called 'plain' in the centre of the city. You are welcome to come and keep him company for a few days. PW

Having just tried setting a puzzle I will pay more attention to grid construction for the rest of the year.

Took me almost longer to find the right combination of words for the anagram as it did to do the puzzle. PD

One of the more easily guessable themes given it's had some publicity in the media MJ

Please find attached my entry form for the January 2018 competition. Great fun!

Many thanks.EL

Entertaining theme and lots of good surfaces in the clues. Monstrous fun!

I liked very much the extra puzzle at the end, having to find four solutions to anagrammize the theme. An extra twist is always welcome, and this was taxing without being impossible.

I had a couple of quibbles:

6 (25ba) - the definition bit was "19", meaning MONSTER. So my question is: was DRACULA a Monster? Wasn't he really a man, who happened to drink blood - which actually now I write it makes him a bit of a monster!! I'll leave this in so you can see my thought process, but actually I'm now OK with it!

22 (4d) - how does the second R in RASHER get clued? I parsed it as SHE supporting RA but couldn't work out where that second R came from HE

Here we go, another new year. It would be nice to be 12/12 after a measly 10 last year but who knows. Anyway no major troubles to start the year with a friendly grid and a theme that quickly sparked into life (ho ho). PA

Here's my solution - no real difficulties this month, though it did take a little while to sort out the words required for the final anagram. (I'd been assuming that 'stalker' was one of them) PM

After first pass with few solved F & MS seemed right, but date of 200 years! Then came DRACULA, the clever MONSTER (missed several times!) before checking the modern ref with the book. Not read book, but will now. Anagram with letters needed, pretty straightforward. Good start to the year. DM

We have finally managed to complete a puzzle on time! Hopefully we will be able to keep it up for the rest of the year. It certainly helps to have all the puzzles in a book so we can have more flexibility.

We have also managed February and March and so will be sending them to you shortly. J&JC

A slow start to this one but then steady progress once the theme had fallen into place. GB

I can do it! MM

Clue background graphic

'Monster Mash' potato - music reference

www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxcM3nCsgIA



We were absolutely delighted to receive MM's solution. Mary is a 3D solver since the early days. And perhaps it is worth saying here that money for the monthly modest prize does not come from calendar sales but is given by private subscribers including generous backgammon players who know how the money is spent.

Here is my January solution. I am glad I had the extra days to complete and send it as January for me started with an infection and then needed time to catch up on everything.

I enjoyed this puzzle and spotted the theme quickly which makes it interesting. I hope you and all at Calendar puzzles are well and managing OK with this cold weather and flu going around. NC

Please see below my entry for the January challenge, and what a challenge it was trying even to read the clues (not a criticism, merely an observation!). I learnt a lot about horror, not my normal choice of topic, but the learning process was enjoyable, and I have to say these crosswords with their devilish themes have greatly widened my knowledge base over the years!

I am, unfortunately, the one undergoing surgery later this week, so hope you and your team have set me plenty of distraction over the coming weeks of convalescence. SF

Bestest wishes for successful surgery and speedy recovery.

A good start to the year with only a couple of answers I can't parse. I hope they are right! My favourite clue was Day 4 evoking the horror dessert of lumpy blancmange ... and even seconds of it!

It was very enjoyable, despite its "monstrous" overtones, and has got the crossword year off to a fine start. I'm looking forward to all the challenges to come. JB

Not too tricky this month, though I had REFIRE (as in pottery) at 18 to start with. GIBSON and SORLEY were new to me. 4, DERIDE, is still puzzling me, though it's fully directed and matches the definition so must be correct.

It was a fairly tricky start to the year, and needed several post-Christmas, cut-price mince pies to start me off! Once I got the theme, I enjoyed the puzzle very much. I might even re-read the book as the films never seem to do it justice.

Hope your year will be a happy one. DS

Thanks for an enjoyable and gentle start to the year with a monster grid! It was good to see Boris make an appearance, if only in the clues. DH

A ghoulishly clever puzzle – great fun! Looking forward to another great year of puzzles. CH

This was our first attempt at a 3D crossword after years of trying (and occasionally solving) ordinary cryptic in The Guardian and Observer. A very nice introduction to a new style of puzzle! Looking forward to next month's challenge. SP

Enjoyable first crossword TS

A nice easy start to the year. Rich with clues to the theme. Most enjoyable! TH

A glance down the clues quickly got us the theme but we then went down a blind alley with "Mary Shelley" in the yellow boxes! Monster fun. J&JH

I am a regular Guardian solver; solving these clues was a similar experience and a similar level of challenge. The order of the clues (alphabetical) stretched the solving time a bit but actually helped me to solve some clues. The 'yellow clue' was less of a help than some of the themed answers in guessing the phrase. Finding the four words for the anagram was easy. Congratulations to all involved. AB

Arachne gave us a 'Don't Watch Alone' (remembering title of tv series in the 60s) 3D which was very much enjoyed. Fanny, Rasher, Seemly, Tinkle: anagram of Frankenstein, Mary, Shelley was nice added touch.

22ba this was!!! (*What fun*)

Many thanks to Arachne for a great start to 2018 PC

The first puzzle of 2018 proved to be a nice gentle way to kick off the new series. We enjoyed it very much and look forward to all the rest. JM

It was a very nice puzzle indeed - an excellent use of the theme in the grid and Arachne contributing her usual high standard of clues - all very enjoyable. Jbs

We are really enjoying the calendar: February is done and will be posted soon ...RH

A super start to the year with an enjoyable, interesting grid and great clues as usual from the Spider Lady! JP

Came close to finishing this, just a couple left. Got the theme, A Gothic Tale but not the theme. Better luck with the February one I hope!! JW

Herewith my solution to the excellent January puzzle, WHAT FUN indeed!
A lovely grid, Gin has used some great tricks to get a lot of thematic material in, and the anagram endgame, which took me some time, was a clever and welcome extra. Hats off to Gin!

Somehow I am always amazed by how excellent Arachne's clues are, even though it is a consistent and unchanging fact of life! I have most of the thematic clues and many others in my calendar marked as Good with double underlining and exclamation marks - I think my favourites were MODERN, MONSTER, NESSIE, SEEMLY, TINKLE, WEREWOLF, WHAT FUN, and YETI.

Great stuff - many thanks to Gin and Arachne, and yourself as always Eric.
BL

Intriguing and ingenious. Arachne always produces crosswords of interest.
Ta. ET

Just had a last-minute lunchtime rush-around to get this one finished and scanned.

I did /most/ of it ages ago it seems, but had a couple of un-confirmed clues, and it's been getting dog-eared in my bag for weeks.

One was confirmed after doing a proper count-up of the "4 solution anagram"

The other was that the answer is a dogleg (3Aw, 12Ac) of 7 letters when I had been looking at it as just a 5 letter answer and wondering how STALK could fit.

(That after getting confused on the Day 33 clue where I didn't notice the reference to 22d and thought the number of letters must be 4.)

Stay well. AJR

Well, Eric, here I am again like the bad penny, sending in my solution to this jolly little crossword just before the witching hour despite having completed it many weeks ago. It recalls the publication, anonymously, of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein on New Year's Day 1818. I particularly enjoyed the modest challenge of identifying the solutions which contributed to the anagram of the theme. 34/22ba!

Peace be with you MC



FRANKENSTEIN PUZZLE. JAN 2018. ARACHNE GRID BY GIN

	SOLUTION	Direction – Clue - Numeration	Explanation	Notes
1	ALTAIR	27ba, 26to Star of India in place of sacrifice (6)	I in ALTAR	
2	ARTIER	14up, 4aw More Bohemian parties try banning clothes (6)	(o)ARTIE(s) (t)R(y)	
3	ASTRAL	7d Paranormal Anglo-Saxon short story enthralling leader of Romantics (6)	AS, R(omantics) in TAL(e)	
4	ATTACK	31up Strike creature's heart with something sharp (6)	(cre)AT(ure), TACK	
5	DEMON*	15aw Dream, on and off, about 19 (5)	D(r)E(a)M, ON	
6	DRACULA*	25ba Jack perhaps rejected seconds of lumpy blancmange, favouring 19 (7)	<CARD, (l)U(mpy) (b)L(ancmange) (f)A(vouring)	
7	DRYNESS	15ac Thirsty state of hideous bat leaving bystanders trembling (7)	*BYSTANDERS minus *BAT	
8	FANNY	20to Female names adopted by supernatural creature (5)	NN in FAY	Girl's name !
9	GALVANI*	5ac Possessed by prodigal vanity, he made dead legs twitch (7)	(prodi)GAL VANI(ty)	Scientist (frog legs) – hence verb to galvanise
10	GAMMAS	5d « Good morning, mum » - opening of several letters to Sappho ? (6)	G, AM, MA, S(everal)	Third letter of Greek alphabet
11	INFIRM	11d Ailing fiend oddly shunned company (6)	(f)l(e)N(d), FIRM	
12	ISLES	11to Giggs' legs no good at all – they're surrounded by water (5)	(g)l(gg)S LE(g)S	
13	LANGUE	6d Fallen angel beginning to understand rules of speech (6)	*[ANGEL, U(nderstand)]	
14	LATERAL	30ba Fifties nurse had meal with case of rioja on the side (7)	[ATE, R(ioj)A] in LL	
15	LEDGE	30to Star of horror films acquiring extremely dazzling prominence (5)	D(azzlin)G in LEE	
16	MAGOT	1aw Grotesque figure of Igor bounds away,	(i)GO(r) in MAT	Chinese figurine OR another name

		covered in tangled hair (5)		for Barbary ape
17	MISUSER	1ac One wrongly applying serum is negligent (7)	*[SERUM IS]	
18	MODERN*	1d Wise and moderate to start with, like 1818 Prometheus ? (6)	MOD, ERN	Ern(ie) Wise
19	MONSTER*	19ac Product of Gollum on steroids? (7)	(Gollu)M ON STER(oids), &lit ?c	
20	NESSIE*	17ac,18to Italian finally passing electric current into Being to produce 19 (6)	N, I in ESSE	all letters included in other answers
21	NITRIDE	8ac,9d Make harder journey, pursuing potential bloodsucker (7)	NIT, RIDE	To nitride=to make harder
22	RASHER	4d Female supporting artist's a bit of a pig (6)	RA'S, HER	
23	ROTELLE	24ac Count tucked into eggs and pasta (7)	TELL in ROE	Pasta – wheel shaped One Look
24	ROUST	28to French novelist initially refused to stir (5)	(p)ROUST	Collins and Word Wizard
25	SEEMLY	3d My eels writhe, <i>comme il faut</i> (6)	*[MY EELS]	
26	SPY	2d-3 See shadow (3)	Double definition	First three letters only
27	STALKER	3aw,12ac Karloff, skipping off set, upset obsessive fan (7)	*[KARL(off) SET]	
28	TATTIE	23up-2, 21to Picking up ragged King Edward in Elgin? (6)	Homophone of tatty	Scots potato
29	THICKER	10ac Less than bright husband breaking heart (7)	H in TICKER	
30	TINKLE	10d I knelt awkwardly to spend a penny (6)	*[I KNELT]	
31	TRAWL	29to Empty tunnel to be filled with uncooked fish (5)	RAW in T(unne)L	
32	WARTS	22to Unsightly features of wretch, animated recently, terrified scientist at first (5)	W(retch),A(nimated) R(Recently) T(errified),S(cientist)	I suppose monsters are more likely to have warts than straw
33	WEREWOLF*	22up,13ba-2,22d 19 used to be the reverse of course (8)	WERE, <FLOW	
34	WHAT FUN	22ba Haunt fellow on vacation abroad ? How amusing ! (4,3!)	*[HAUNT, F(ello)W]	
35	YETI*	16d 19 feet of very rude, ill-spelt graffiti (4)	(ver)Y (rud)E (ill- spel)T (graffit)l	



Mr Eric Westbrook
12 Wilson Lane
Coventry
CV6 6AD

15 February 2018

Dear Supporter,

Thank you so much for your generous donation of £2,000.00 to BBC Children in Need.

Every year we're amazed by the kindness, energy and creativity of our supporters. Without fail, you continue to come together and raise millions of pounds that change the lives of thousands of disadvantaged children and young people right across the UK. We hope that, along with the important business of raising money, you had a great time doing your thing!

To find out more about the difference your money makes, head over to bbc.co.uk/pudsey where you can learn more about our work and some of the disadvantaged children and young people who have benefited from donations like yours. If you haven't already, you can also sign up to our newsletter to keep up to date with all things Pudsey.

Once again, from all of us at Pudsey HQ, and on behalf of all the children in the UK, you've helped, thank you. We simply couldn't continue our work without you.

Best wishes,

Simon Antrabas

Chief Executive, BBC Children in Need

bbc.co.uk/pudsey



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Receipt

Receipt number

Received the sum of £ 2,000.00

0010710

For the BBC Children in Need Appeal

From 5D-Crosswords Ltd

Date 16/02/2018

Acknowledgement RNIB Pears Centre

Ann Hughes is one of the kindest and caring people I know, as well as being a most diligent Secretary to the Fundraising Group. RNIB Pears Centre is in the process of changing letter headings and whilst waiting for this I include below Ann's instinctive rapturous email reply to our letter and donation of £2000.

To Eric Westbrook 4 Feb at 2:59 PM

Good afternoon Eric,

Thank you, for your correspondence which I received yesterday.

Wow!! what an amazing amount you raised for Pears Centre.

A big THANK YOU to you and your fellow amazing crossword planners and puzzlers.

I'll inform the new head teacher Mr Rob Jones and fellow fundraisers at our next meeting on Tuesday and will send the cheque and a copy of your letter to Toby our Treasurer who will bank it in RNIB Pears Centre's account.

We are all fine except for seasonal colds.
I hope your health is improving and family are well.
Roy sends his best wishes and regards.

Best wishes
Ann

(I will publish the formal official letter from Pears FRG when letter heading sorted.)

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RNIB Pears Centre
Wheelwright Lane, Ash Green,
Coventry CV7 9RA

mib.org.uk/pearscentre
Tel: 02476 369 500
pearscentre@mib.org.uk

28th Feb 2018

Dear Eric,

On behalf of the children and young people who live and learn at RNIB Pears Centre I would like to say a big THANK YOU to you and your fellow amazing crossword planners and puzzlers for raising a fantastic £2,000.

The money will go towards a planned "Sensory Garden" which will include an outdoor education area as well as other exciting features.

So once again thank you all so much.

kindest Regards,

Ann Hughes
(RNIB Pears Centre Fundraising Group)

RNIB Charity

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4. February Competition Deadline

The deadline for the February Competition is midnight 28th February .
That's tomorrow!!

I feel the deadline has crept up on us a bit, perhaps because we extend the January deadline to include solvers who discovered the puzzle calendar after Christmas. But that meant some complacent solvers like me suddenly realise near the end of February that the brilliant Vlad is rather challenging - doable but takes a bit of time for pennies to drop.

The official deadline is still tomorrow 28th, but in practice we will allow slippage of a few days. Do send in your solution. It cheers everyone up! We also get invaluable feedback which helps guide the project. We had a bumper crop of solutions in January with many solvers cracking their first 3D crossword. February is 10% down at the moment.

The BBC CiNA 3D Crossword Competition is not a sprint like The Times or the RNIB 3D tournament. It's a marathon to be won by hares and tortoises alike.

It takes stamina and the ability to crack puzzles from a range of twelve different solvers.

It's not a piece of cake! But I bet you could do it.



Nora Boswell's
World Championship
Trophy 2011

Finally and most of all, 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

