

## 3D Crossword April 2020 Newsletter 4

This edition covers the following items:

1. Review of the March 3D Crossword
2. March solvers comments
3. A word on the end of year 2020 3D World Championships and RPM Trophy
4. March Hints and Tips

**The winner of the March crossword is Alan Browne of Chatham. Many congratulations, Alan.**

### 1. Review of the March 3D Crossword

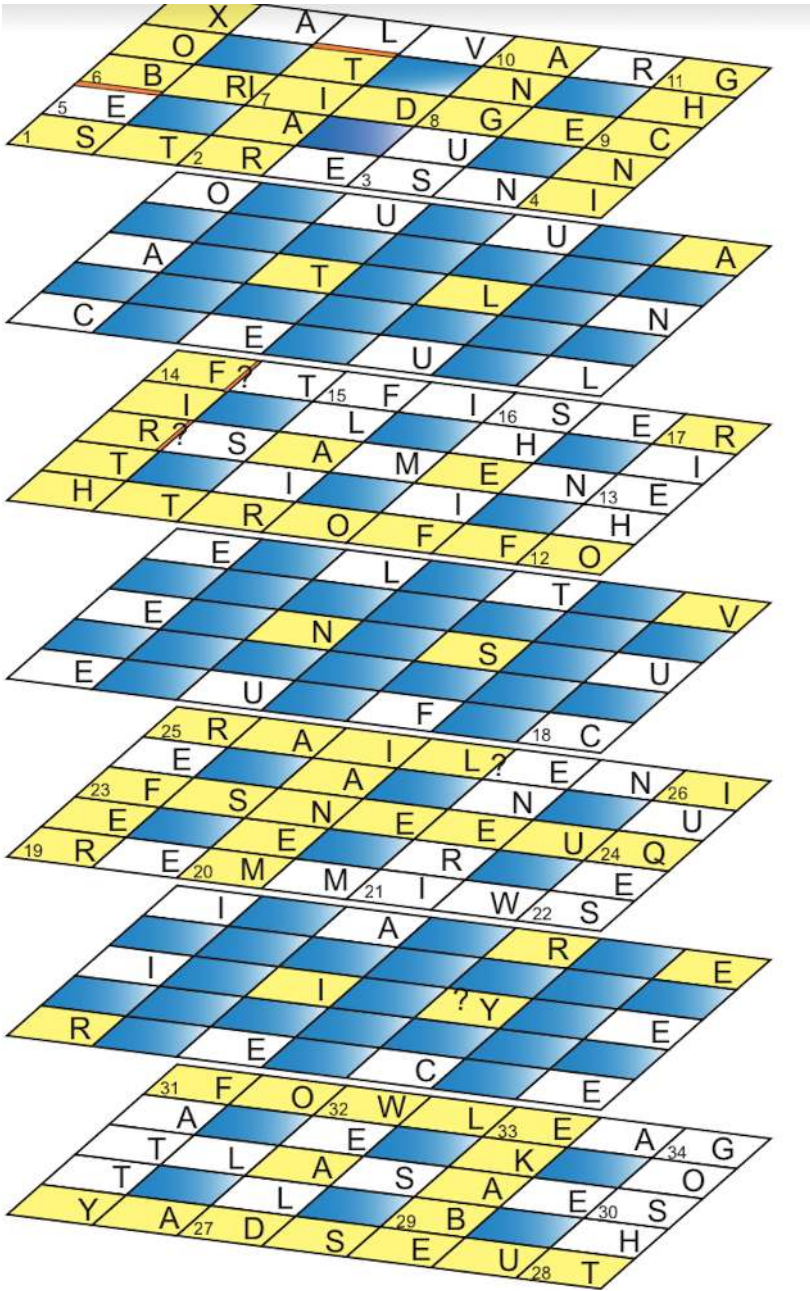
Crossword designed by Max Jackson, clues set by Vlad. The rubric read; noting a 130th and a 170th anniversary. Clues are presented in alphabetical order of their solutions. Vlad, who regularly sets for the Guardian and for the Independent as Tyrus, always sets some testing and entertaining clues.

So we're noting two anniversaries with no highlighted or asterisked clues. I can't make any sense out of the picture clue yet so its straight into solving and no doubt the anniversaries will reveal themselves as we progress. On the first run through I solve around 8 to 10 clues, including ANGLESEY and BRITANNIA, but no obvious theme contenders yet. As I continue some superb clues including Day 4 (29aw, 33up) "Say, Hollywood promoter caught out" for BAKER, Day 6 (6aw) "Foreman used to do it with Derek - its wrong" for BOX, Day 19 (34b-4) "Setter welcomes one Irish speaker" for GAEL and Day 34 (3d) "Do things having no time to kill" for SUFFICE. Any clue that makes you smile or say ahh! Is a gem and these all did.

With most of the grid complete Day 16 is proving elusive and a likely clincher for the theme. Eventually I get FORTH for the ending and the beginning is then obvious. So we have two anniversaries and two stretches of water and we also have a BRIDGE. And, I seem to recollect, that the BRITANNIA is a bridge or is it the ex royal yacht now permanently moored in the Firth of Forth. Either way it fits into the theme. The web confirms the royal yacht moored in Edinburgh but that the Britannia bridge is across to Anglesey. It also confirms the two anniversaries and that the designers of the Forth bridge were Baker & Fowler. So there we have it.

And the decidedly tricky picture clue. Well we have a FIR in the shape of a T, hence FIRT? The rest defeats me but see the next page. There we have HOFF and, it transpires that the bloke with the hammer is THOR and he is


contorted giving ORTH. I'll remember this trick for the anagram indicator next time.





March 3D  
Crossword  
Grid by Max  
Jackson  
Clues by  
Vlad

The crossword celebrates the 130th anniversary of the building of the Forth (rail) bridge and the 170th anniversary of the Britannia bridge over the Menai Straights to Anglesey. Benjamin Baker and Sir John Fowler designed the Forth bridge

Day 16  
14to,12ba  
(5,2,5)



FIRTH OF FORTH

FIR + T +  
HOFF (aka David Hasselhoff) +  
ORTH (contorted Thor)

Drawing by Frank Paul

### Clue explanations for March 3D crossword

	SOLUTION	Direction – Clue – Count	Explanation	Notes
1	ANGLESEY	10to-3,8d-6 'It may be right,' – agreed about island (8)	(Right) angle + yes rev	thematic
2	ANGUS	10to A North American covering golf here in Scotland (5)	A N US round G	
3	AUSTERE	10d Wind over eastern plain (7)	Auster + E	
4	BAKER	29aw,33up-2 Say, Hollywood promoter caught out (5)	Backer less c, ref Paul Hollywood	thematic
5	BAREFIT	6d Fair bet drunken Glaswegian's shoeless (7)	Fair bet*	Collins
6	BOX	6aw Foreman used to do it with Derek – it's wrong (3)	Bo (Derek) + x ref George Foreman	thematic
7	BRIDGE	6ac-6 Jones, when logging, largely game (6)	Bridge(t) (Jones), logging ref to keeping diary	thematic
8	BRITANNIA	6ac-3,7d Boatman gutted – train running, and road, over this crossing (9)	B(oatma)n train* + A1 rev	thematic
9	CO-HEIR	18up-2,12aw Incredibly heroic but he won't succeed alone (6)	heroic*	
10	COLIN	18up,4ba-2 Money's left inside for boy (5)	L in coin	
11	DEMURER	27up Increasingly shy doctor keeps Hull partner on (7)	Dr round Emu re	
12	ENEMAS	13ba-6 Nurse backed identical medical procedures (6)	EN + same rev	
13	ESCHER	5to,1d-5 Cheers up artist (6)	Cheers*	
14	FATTY	31to Fairy cakes too tempting from the outset – he's probably eaten a lot (5)	Fay round t(oo) t(empting)	
15	FIREFOX	31up Explorer's rival is sexy woman with passion (7)	Fire + fox ref Internet Explorer	urban dict., Wiki

16	<b>FIRTH OF FORTH</b>	14to,12ba Pointless opening house following castle and hotel in estuary (5, 2, 5)	First less S + ho + f + fort + H	thematic
17	FLAIR	15to Ability to get just over fifty (5)	Fair round L	
18	<b>FOWLER</b>	31ac-5,33up-2 Hunter's not so nice on radio (6)	Fouler hom	thematic
19	GAEL	34ba-4 Setter welcomes one Irish speaker (4)	Gel round a	
20	GOSHT	34to That's surprising temperature for meat (5)	Gosh + t	
21	GRAVLAX	11ba A lot of juice, a little lamb chop (for Americans) and salmon dish (7)	Grav(y) + l(amb) + ax	
22	<b>INCHGARVIE</b>	4aw,11d-6 Worked on each Virgin Island (10)	each Virgin*	thematic
23	INSERTS	4ba Son stops motionless – skinhead enters (7)	S in inert + s(kinhead)	
24	IRENE	21aw Peaceful female letter's full of anger? Quite the opposite (5)	Ire round en	
25	<b>MENAI STRAIT</b>	20aw,1ac-3,2aw-4 Channel controlled Ant's airtime (5,6)	Ant's airtime*	thematic
26	<b>QUEENS FERRY</b>	24ba,23to,19d Question crook seen by official round railway crossing here (11)	Qu + seen* + ref rev + Ry	thematic
27	<b>RAIL</b>	25ac-4 Bar fake news purveyor on return (4)	Liar rev	thematic
28	REFER	19aw Pass on wacky baccy half-heartedly (5)	Re(e)fer	
29	RESIFT	17ba-6 Refine again – awkward first time at the end (6)	First (tim)e*	
30	SEA SALT	30ba In use as alternative preservative (3,4)	Hidden	
31	SEQUENCE	30up,9ba-2 Run round quad out of puff – spotted church (8)	Seen round quad less ad (= puff) + CE	
32	SEQUIN	22aw,26ba-2 Almost ready, Queen wearing sparkler (6)	Se(t)) + qu + in	

33	SHELF	16to Rider's book left regularly on here? (5)	She (Rider Haggard novel) + l(e)f(t)	
34	SUFFICE	3d Do things, having no time to kill (7)	Stuff less t + ice	
35	SWIMMER	22ba Fish stew wife's eaten (7)	Simmer round w	
36	TESCO	28up-5 Big seller in mate's company (5)	Hidden	
37	TUESDAY	28ba River crossing used at work part of the week (7)	Tay round used*	
38	WAILFUL	32up Deliberate over article expressing grief (7)	Wilful round a	
39	WEALD	32to Woodland in Wales mostly run by Department (5)	Wale(s)* + D	

## 2. 3D Solvers Comments

### February

**Apology** to the memory of Patrick O'Brian, whose name I spelled incorrectly last month.

**Apology to HS**, whose feedback I overlooked in February:

Another straightforward solve; 'SKYRED' and, for some reason, 'PING' were the ones which held me up a bit. Favourite clue" lots of the double-definition ones (17, 18).

### March

A clever puzzle with some nice misleading clues. I liked the theme and having a good idea about the long answers was a help to the solve. I particularly liked the misdirection of the Hollywood promoter and chuckled to myself when I got the drunken Glaswegian! JP

Vlad kept us steaming along with a very nice 3D. Some tricky clues of which I liked Baker and Shelf best. Certainly beginning to chug up the gradient! Many thanks, Vlad. PC

This was tough! I needed help to understand the anniversaries, as the clues formed something of a jigsaw puzzle. So online sources told me about Britannia Bridge over the Menai Strait in Anglesey (opened 5/3/1850) and the

Forth (opened 4/3/1890). Other theme words added interest. Thanks to Vlad, Max Jackson and Robert Stephenson!

PS, I loved the clue at Day 9: COHEIR!!

PPS I am not sure about DEMURER at Day 11.

JA

A 31-day puzzle for a 31-day month! That doesn't happen often - congratulations to Chalicea. A poignant survey of an institution that broke apart under the strain of populism and its uglier offshoots. No possible present-day parallels there then. New word: CHOCO, at least with this meaning. Old word, only ever used (by me) when solving crosswords: NISEI. Rebus: LE (Leicester postcode area) + AGUERO - RO (not entirely sure why the crossed-out badge signifies this) + OF NATI (beats me) + ON S(hilling)  
A special thank you to the 3D team for arranging a print version this year. I did start last year with print-outs, but never had my heart in it in the same way as I do with a proper robust printed calendar. PA

Celebrating the opening of the Forth Bridge on 4th March 1890, and the Menai Strait Bridge on 5th March 1850. Reminds me of going on holiday in my childhood 😊. RE

Thoroughly enjoyable. JC

They are getting harder - INCHGARVIE took some finding. HB

Very enjoyable. The theme was right up my street. I thought the puzzle was well-pitched, with the right blend of accessible and tricky clues. I liked the clever use of proper names (Foreman, Derek, Hollywood, Jones, Hull and Rider) in ways designed to mislead. ABe

Glad to see one about the engineering men. C&SC

I really liked this one, the Forth Bridge / Britannia Bridge theme was right up my street as a railway engineer! The difficulty was also just right, quite hard to break into but then all falling into place. I have to confess to not fully understanding a couple of clues but never mind! GB

Excellent puzzle with plenty of testing clues and a super grid fill. JM

Tougher challenge than January and February, but most enjoyable. AG

Day 15 31up - fabulous clue. I worked in IT for >35 years and the delightful misdirection still caught me out. :-) Loved it! CW

I am still here and enjoying. MM

Thanks for another great puzzle.

Loved the theme - some of it local for me.

Particularly liked 6d as that is how my husband takes his whisky! (No - not shoeless, straight.) SW

I enjoyed the virtual ramble round Britain provided by this puzzle - the anniversaries of the Forth Bridge in 1890 and the Britannia Bridge in 1850 helped! DS

Diagram rather bitty and snaky - I must try harder!

Clues to 4, 6, 8, 16, 31 puzzling. Would it have been too easy if the thematics had been highlighted? MJ

A few leaps of faith for us but with a bit of luck we didn't hit the rock face. JM

Trickier for me with a few clues for which the checking letters didn't give me much to go on. Day 4 gave me a spot of bother but the penny eventually dropped about the Hollywood question! JN

Thank you, everyone. A super puzzle JJ

Best wishes to everyone involved in Calendar Puzzles. Things like this help to keep us sane at the moment. D&TE

Enjoyable solve, quite tricky at times, with plenty of 'Aah' moments. Good to commemorate two great achievements.

Some longer entries than usual, which I approve. Only in real life am I a herpetophobe (nearly put my hand on one in Portmeirion while inspecting what looked like a deadly poisonous mushroom).

I still don't like bars, though. AC

Enjoyed this enormously. Thanks to Vlad for the fun. RR

Enjoyable. I liked Day 31 clue, also Day 14 - both skilful and witty misleads. But I didn't fully understand either the verbal or the picture clue for Day 16.

EF

Lots to like here. Loved the first two bits of Frank's drawing but can't work out the third yet! Favourites: FIREFOX (great definition), SHELF (I've always liked Haggard - guilty pleasure!) HS

We appreciated the engineering theme and the memories of fine journeys. Indeed, quite a wide range of general knowledge required. J&JH

No particular difficulty, though I couldn't see how Frank Paul's drawing works, being unable to identify the person. PM

Loved the visual clue with Firth of Forth. SC

This was a harder crossword for me - just the clueing, not the grid. Rightly so, and I expect April's will be another step up. A good distraction in these uncertain times. I am really enjoying these puzzles, and all the support. Hope you are all keeping safe and well. BS

I'm sure this puzzle will be one of the highlights of my March 2020. It afforded me, and I'm sure many others, a very satisfying few hours' distraction from the real world. With grateful thanks. J&JB

In Australia we watch Michael Portillo's journeys on UK railways and recently saw one crossing the Menai Straits, so I got the theme fairly quickly, helped by the photograph.

Whoever heard of GRAVLAX? I had even more trouble because my initial answer for day 15 was FIREFLY which is a search engine (Explorer's rival). This was after I considered such competitors as Scott and Amundsen, etc. Inchgarvie took a long time to identify as well because it doesn't appear in many dictionaries/encyclopaedia. However these challenges are exactly what crosswords of this standard require. ST

It took me a few days to break into this one then I found a few Scottish clues and the Firth of Forth. I didn't manage Britannia Bridge until the hints came through. My favourite clue was day 20 - Gosht - particularly as I have an Indian partner. I was kicking myself when day 37 - Tuesday only went in at the end with all the crossing letters, it seems so obvious now.

I thoroughly enjoyed this and am even more pleased I signed up this year in light of the lock down. What better way to spend it than doing battle with a crossword! Please keep up the good work - it seems even more essential now. I hope you are all well. SB



As regular visitors to the National Railway Museum, we loved this theme and the splendid picture of the Sir Nigel Gresley. One of us grew up in Edinburgh, so was very familiar with 16, 26 and even the splendid 22. Thanks! N&SI

No real problems and I even worked out Frank Paul's drawings, which I usually have trouble with.

My main holdup was Firefox as I spent ages combing reference books for a physical person before realising that the icon on my toolbar was staring me in the face! PD

Although I assumed the two bridges across the Firth of Forth and the Menai Strait were the events, I had to look up to confirm dates and find the others, eg Baker, Fowler, Britannia. It has been a long time since I last crossed the Menai Straits in the 60s. The Forth was earlier in the last decade! Great fun! DM

Much to admire in the March puzzle, not least the impressive amount of interesting thematic content crammed into the grid.

However, Vlad's clueing was the real star for me: I particularly enjoyed the clues to GAEL, BOX, BAKER and DEMURER, whereas the clue to BRITANNIA is absolutely brilliant – to weave the history of the building of the bridge into the clue is real genius. Thanks again for all your efforts. KMCD

An enjoyable solve! Liked SUFFICE, COHEIR and SHELF.

Local clues in BAKER and DEMURER stalled, but did not halt, me!

I reckon 15 is clueing FOXFIRE.

Frank Paul's drawing is hilarious. I ask you, is any man more versatile than the HOFF?!

Thank you. AM

Filling in the final grid is quite tricky when the words are all split up! NC

Good workout. One new word for me (gosht). Still can't quite work out Frank Paul's drawing even knowing what it represents. IL

Please find attached my most recent efforts. It's good that some things are still the same... DH

Thank you for a pleasant, straightforward puzzle.

Crosswords are brilliant at passing the time while self isolating so many thanks to all the setters. BB

A real challenge. RC

Two memorable bridges here!

And some cleverly misleading clues.

But I can't work out the picture clue this time, so await the explanation with interest. SB

### **3. A Word on the 2020 BBC CiNA and RNIB 3D World Championships and RPM Trophy**

Until 2019 the 3D World Championships have required solvers to correctly complete twelve 3D puzzles over the course of the year, design a 3D grid and construct a clue for one of the entries in their grid. Alongside this we had the RPM Trophy (named after Ray Parry-Morris one of 3D's very best grid designers) which was available to entry by anyone and required entrants to design a 3D grid with a view for inclusion in the Calendar two years hence.

In 2019 with Eric falling ill and the whole future of the 3D Project in doubt we pragmatically simplified the World championship into a clue writing completion for those who had successfully completed 12 puzzles over the course of the year. At the very last moment we added the RPM Trophy to run alongside to generate grids for the 2021 Calendar which was very much in doubt.

For the 2020 3D World Championships we shall retain the requirement for solvers to have completed 12 puzzles correctly over the course of 12 months. Although we are not now marking submitted entries we are retaining them until the year end. By saving all submitted entries for the year we shall be able to check the potential winner's 12 entries and confirm that they are all correct.

In terms of reduced workload this is a significant improvement on checking every entry over the year but still fairly labour intensive. For 2021 we are aiming for a technical solution. Jos, our webmaster and IT expert, has devised a potential solution that requires solvers to enter some or all of their solutions on line where they are automatically checked. We are aiming to trial this approach with the May crossword. Anyone would like to be involved with the trial, and we hope that lots of you will, is welcome to join in. The details will be added to the crossword download as well as being sent out separately by email.

The aim is to take into account solvers comments from the trials in the final solution. Sending on feedback from the May trial, there may well be further

trials where solvers are asked to enter something other than the complete word list that will establish correct t entries.

We haven't yet defined the precise nature of the year end challenge for the 2020 World Championships which will be announced in due course. As before there will also be an open competition for the RPM Trophy for grid design.

## 4 March 3D Hints and Tips

### 20.3 Hints & Tips March 2020 Clues by Vlad to Max Jackson Grid

You may have encountered *Vlad* in The Guardian or Independent as *Tyrus*. Jim Toal is a retired English teacher in Sheffield and always very supportive of our 3D project with BBC CiNA and RNIB. I last spoke with *Vlad*, in *Enigmatists* expansive back garden on the outskirts of York. Jim was immediately welcoming and reminded me that I could always rely on a *Vlad* puzzle. He shows much current general knowledge in his clues. This is great when you know it and tantalising when you don't. Fortunately in 3D puzzles you have a great chance of getting all the checking letters, and *Vlad's* clueing is crystal clear. He has a very large bag of tricks so the solving is always most entertaining. You will love a number of cryptic definitions. They catch me every time hidden away until the penny drops and I just go 'Doh!'

Great British Bake Off fans will devour one of the thematic clues. There's an occasional hint of something non-English.

I am grateful to Gin for observations on the photo: –

We are very lucky to have Graham Fox photos for all 12 months this year. (check out the back pages of the calendar if you haven't already done so.) As is mentioned there, the image often gives a sideways reference to the theme of the puzzle and this month, March, is no exception – along with some red-herrings. Set your sights low. A morceau de gateau once you are on the right track.

Day	Clue	Hint
0	Graham Fox - photograph	We are very lucky to have Graham Fox photos for all 12 months this year. (check out the back pages of the calendar if you haven't already done so.) As is mentioned there, the image often gives a sideways reference to the theme of the puzzle and this month, March, is no exception. Ignore the good Sir Nigel Gresley and his train The Moorlander. A couple of red-herrings if ever there was one. Set your sights much lower. A morceau de gateau once you are on the right track (or under it). GS

1	'It may be right,' – agreed about island (8)	<p>The definition might be 'It may be right' or the definition might be 'island'. The first would be cryptic. The second, 'island' would not be very helpful in a quick crossword. There are thousands of islands – certainly a large number of those we might recall for a crossword. 'agreed about' here tells us to use a very common three-letter word for 'agreed' as we might say to denote agreement, and then turn it round backwards.</p> <p>I found the first five letter component of the solution by putting 'RIGHT ?????' into the Search Box of 'One Look Dictionary' .:</p> <p><a href="https://www.onelook.com/">https://www.onelook.com/</a></p> <p>I reduced the very large number of possible answers by clicking 'common words and phrases'. This reduced possibilities to just ten. I went straight to the answer.</p> <p>The solution is one of Max Jackson's 11 possibly 12 themed solutions. EW</p>
2	A North American covering golf here in Scotland	<p>Shame on me. I didn't know that golf represented the letter G in the International Phonetic Alphabet. Mind you, I don't have a pilot's licence either. If I may take you back to primary school for a moment don't forget there are two forms of the indefinite article. The rest is an easy Shoe-in* or might we say Hoof-in. *Deliberately mis-spelt to accommodate the extremely witty rejoinder! (two meanings, same word). GS</p>
4	Say, Hollywood promoter caught out (5)	<p>Clever misdirection in this. Your first thought is that you are looking for a Hollywood promoter, but think again! You do need a word for a promoter and then remove the c for caught. This will give you the answer of which 'Hollywood' is an example. JP</p>
5	Fair bet drunken Glaswegian's shoeless (7)	<p>'Drunken' completes the image of someone staggering along Sauchiehall street having lost their shoes, but in this case it is a sign of an anagram and you need to mix up the letters to give you a Glasgow term for shoeless. JP</p>
6	Foreman used to do it with Derek – it's wrong (3)	<p>For this clue we're going to need to identify a specific Foreman and a specific Derek (in both cases these are surnames). We're looking for something that Foreman used to do. The wordplay is Derek's first name and a single letter for wrong (also a Roman representation of her most famous film). N&amp;S!</p>
9	Incredibly heroic but he won't succeed alone (6)	<p>'Incredibly' is another word that can be used as an anagram indicator. Unscramble heroic and you should find a word for someone who won't succeed alone. JP</p>

15	Explorer's rival is sexy woman with passion (7)	The misdirecting definition is "Explorer's rival" but we're not looking for a human. Instead we want a tech rival to the now outdated Explorer. For the wordplay look for a short word for sexy woman preceded by a slightly longer word for hot (both beginning with the same letter). N&SI
16	Pointless opening house following castle and hotel in estuary.	A thematic estuary with a cryptic definition in no fewer than 5 parts. Frank Paul's drawing should help! At the start is a "pointless opening" (another word for opening with one of the compass points N,S,E or W removed). For the rest, we need abbreviations for "house", "following" and "hotel", as well as another word for castle. AMS
18	Hunter's not so nice on radio	"...on radio" ie hearing a word but not seeing it written is a clear indication of a homophone or homonym. A word meaning hunter but sounds like "not so nice". As this indicates a comparative, a good place to start is putting -er at the end of the word you are looking for – which conveniently coincides with the end of hunter too. This is most reassuring and leaves you with just four letters which mean not nice. You could try dirty weather or a punishable offence in football, or maybe a bird kept as a food source? Don't forget - you are on the radio. GS
20	That's surprising temperature for meat.	A clue with three parts: an element of surprise, temperature, and meat. With the answer having only 5 letters, it is a safe bet that temperature gives simply a T. So we either want a surprise starting with a T followed by another word for meat, or we want a type of meat with a surprising start and a T at the end. As the clues are presented in alphabetical order of the answers, one of these possibilities can easily be ruled out once a few of the other answers are known.AMS
21	A lot of juice, a little lamb chop (for Americans) and salmon dish (7)	Don't spend your time trying to think of what Americans might call lamb chops! You need to split the clue into parts. A lot of juice suggests most of the alternative word for a type of 'juice'. A little lamb suggests only a small part of the word lamb. Follow this with the American spelling of another word for chop and you should come up with a salmon dish. JP
22	Worked on each Virgin Island (10)	"Worked on" suggests that this is an anagram of EACH VIRGIN. This answer is an island (much smaller than the answer to Day 1) related to the theme and probably unfamiliar unless you're a local. The name consists of a short Scots word for island followed by a less familiar Scots word for a sprat (which sounds like a singer from Elbow).

26	Question crook seen by official round railway crossing here (11)	This one is part of the theme, so that should help. You need to examine the clue in parts again. 'Question' can often indicate a 'q' or a 'qu'. 'Crook' is not a criminal but an anagram indicator for the next part 'seen' After that you need to think of another word for an official 'round' or backwards and finally an abbreviation for railway to get the crossing. JP
27	Bar fake news purveyor on return.	"On return" hints at letters running the wrong way. We are after another word for "bar" that read from back to front yields a "purveyor of fake news". AMS
31	Run round quad out of puff - spotted church (8)	The trick here is to find the definition and how the clue is pointing to it. You often find that 'puff' in a crossword refers to an advert (ad) and in this case 'out of puff' means you need to take the ad away from quad. Then 'round' the 'qu' that's left you need another word for spotted and an abbreviation for church to give you another word for the definition – Run. JP

I am grateful to the Hints & Tips Team of Gin - Garry Stripling, Jim Pennington - Philostrate, Aramis – Alison Ramage & Andre Sonnet, which very usefully includes two Scottish super-solvers, an Englishman in Paris, a German plus an alien from another star system.

Happy solving!

Eric Westbrook

Registered blind RNIB member and public speaker

3D Crossword Designer Sirius

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