

1. London Times as told to Ucaoimhu

Hi! You may remember me from the film *Love Actually*, in which I had a brilliant “intercontinental” scheme to fly from London to Milwaukee in winter, to get a new audience for my cryptic crosswords! (They may have modified that plot point a tad in the final cut.) Anyway, I’m back with three cryptics, each of which is *exactly* in the style of one UK publication!

First up is the *London Times*, which has a daily cryptic — unlike the *London Times*, which only has them on an occasional Sunday, or the *LONDON Times*, which has no cryptics. (I’m pretty sure I’ve got the names of those papers right.) In this puzzle, all clues work normally, but when the answers are entered some special unchecked squares must receive (instead of a single letter) *London*, *London*, or *LONDON*. Whenever a special square is the *m*th square from the start and the *n*th from the end of an *entry*, note the *m*th letter from the start and the *n*th from the end of the corresponding *clue*. Then follow these steps to create a specific item relevant to where we are:

(1) Read all the *m*th letters, and then all the *n*th letters, for *LONDON* (both in clue order) to get an instruction referring to and affecting *all* the special squares in the grid’s *bottom* half.

(2) Following the instruction from (1) will reveal four figures.

(3) Read all the *m*th letters, and then all the *n*th letters, for *London* (both in clue order) to get an instruction referring to *all* the special squares in the grid’s *top* half (but only affecting a set of squares *adjacent* to them).

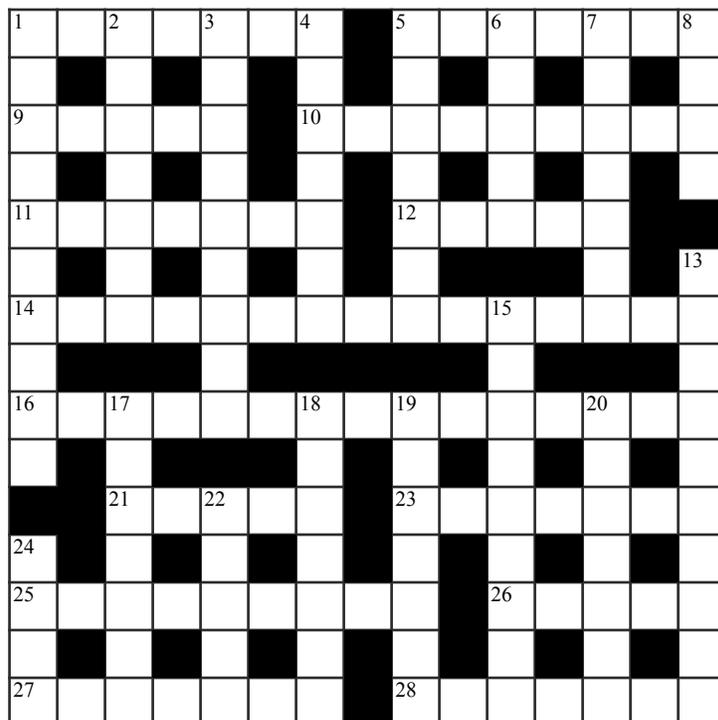
(4) Following the instruction from (3) will reveal two additional figures on the periphery, and . . .

(5) . . . will also show an item in the center, whose middle letters form a big square. Pair these middle letters up, in order, with the figures from (2).

(6) Convert each letter from (5) to a number *p* (using A = 1, B = 2, etc.); where the figure paired with it is *q*, the *q*th word from the *end* of the clue(s) numbered *p* will say what item(s) to put into the square with that letter (if you can draw that small) and the *p*th word from the *start* of the clue(s) numbered *q* will say what item(s) to put elsewhere between the figures from (4).

(7) The figures from (2) also form a local time; apply the instruction from (1) to two more squares to convert this to a London time (as it might be expressed across the Atlantic) and then write the contents of those two squares, expanded into an unabbreviated word, above the grid.

(8) Finally, read all the *m*th letters, and then all the *n*th letters, for *London* (both in clue order) to see what you have created by following these steps — and also what sort of times have not been encountered in London *or* here for quite a while now.



ACROSS

1. Equipment used to transfer liquid drinks includes horn, unrightfully
5. Beamers requiring fuel and hammer lodged in clefts (2 wds.) [NI3]
9. Biased towards the Italian tools, primarily
10. Three from Higashiosaka twice receiving small, normal gestural signal (2 wds.)
11. Sheltered side protects individuals from a Spanish city
12. Pull up anchor made out of vanadium in Elea, remarkably
14. Strew draperies on Val’s spouter of maxims, for one? (2 wds.)
16. No. 100 inside gets stronger on numerous occasions, and each is unwanted (5 wds.)
21. Ringer must at last have victories
23. OK (while imperfect) grades besetting the Belgian the author judgmentally chides, say
25. Dissolute maids deny having icosahedral bodies, e.g. (*hyph.*)
26. Agitated yak besieges Quebecois in land with many a baobab
27. Word describing hot aluminum!
28. Old city enthralled by penny-ante entertainer Jimmy

DOWN

1. What brine evaporating in land depressions may produce as plants will veer about (2 wds.)
2. Ahead now, barely, between Rip Torn and the lead from *Rumours*
3. Not excited to put in chopped-up Bernstein musical (3 wds.)
4. Eyewear’s nose brace in badger set beneath quiet kingdom a queen in the Bible had
5. Archaic artisans’ group Down Under truncated musket (or similar arm) inside of pavilion
6. Uh, chaws will be chewed
7. Uttered Norm’s expressions, revealing personality within
8. My lad’s new, new slingshot that has been caught beneath the forward parts of sodbuster
13. Erratically stall a grave phase of life for a caterpillar (2 wds.)
15. Person who produces a magnetic metal ramekin or corkscrews [NI2]
17. Determine the concentration of bird and rodent energy
18. Ads only vaguely pertaining to an ecclesiastical council
19. Got the sword away from nude, bald berzerker [NI2]
20. Using quarter from nice, teeny stranger like a Japanese coin that’s coppery and smooth-edged (*hyph.*)
22. Mughal’s faith confused Lisa and Mike
24. Forget old Cambridge University